



Sharps Collection Box Expansion

Final location selection FAQs

How does the program currently operate?

- Metro currently manages [14 sharps collection boxes](#) that are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week for free sharps disposal. The sharps collection boxes are provided for individuals and households and are not for business use. Sharps include but are not limited to lancets, syringes, needles, needle connectors, auto-injectors and infusion sets.

What is the history of the sharps collection box program?

- Multnomah County began the sharps collection box effort in 2016 to make Portland cleaner and safer for people by reducing the number of improperly discarded syringes. The effort included multiple government agencies and spanned several years. The current 14 collection box locations are in Portland. The locations were chosen by Multnomah County and the City of Portland, who pay Metro an annual fee to manage the program and cover the costs of servicing the boxes. Metro began managing the sharps collection box program in 2019, with Multnomah County, City of Portland and other funding partners. Metro funds the sharps collection box located at the North by Northeast Community Health Center.

Why does Metro want to expand the sharps collection box program?

- Sharps collection boxes increase access to free and convenient disposal options. Between January 2022 and May 2024, Metro's RID Patrol collected more than 90,000 dumped sharps from public spaces across the region. This poses a serious livability concern for people in greater Portland, who report finding used syringes in their neighborhoods. Access to sharps disposal is becoming more difficult due to fewer pharmacies accepting sharps and the high cost of disposal options like mail-back programs.

How much will the sharps collection box expansion pilot cost?

- Metro allocated \$800,000 of state cleanup funds from [House Bill 5202](#) to launch a four-year pilot program that will expand sharps collection boxes throughout the region to reduce the number of sharps dumped in public spaces.

When will the sharps collection box expansion pilot go into effect?

- Metro plans to install 20-25 additional sharps collection boxes by July 1, 2025.

Where will the new sharps collection boxes be located?

- Metro collaborated with local governments and community-based organizations to determine where to install the new sharps collection boxes, receiving [more than 100 proposed locations](#). To prioritize the suggestions, Metro developed a suitability scorecard that considers eight lenses such as the proposed locations' proximity to public transit, equity-focused areas, multi-family residences and sites where sharps are frequently found. Additionally, Metro prioritized placing the new collection boxes across the region to increase access outside of Portland.

What are the Downtown Portland Clean & Safe sharps collection boxes?

- Downtown Portland Clean & Safe manages four sharps collection boxes, which are separate from the 14 collection boxes that Metro currently manages.

What is the responsibility of a property owner hosting a sharps collection box?

- Owners hosting a sharps collection box will be asked to perform the following tasks, with responsibilities discussed on a per-contract basis:
 - Identify and advise Metro on suitable property location for box placement.
 - Provide guidance on the necessary permits for box placement.
 - Notify Metro of any construction or other activities that may impact access to the box.
 - Assist in promoting use of the box.
 - Maintain communication with Metro to address timely questions and concerns.

Who manages the sharps collection boxes?

- Metro oversees program operations through contracted companies that service the sharps collection boxes two times per week. **The property owner hosting the sharps collection box is not responsible for maintenance.** Metro is also working with the Oregon Refuse and Recycling Association to discuss servicing options in locations that have franchised solid waste collection systems.

What does “servicing” the sharps collection box involve?

- Maintaining the sharps collection boxes helps to present a safe and welcoming environment for people who use the boxes. Sharps collection boxes are currently serviced twice a week, which includes:
 - Removing and replacing sharps container bins.
 - Transporting the sharps container bins to an authorized disposal location.
 - Submitting data on the Metro application via smartphone or tablet.
 - Taking photos to document box conditions such as a full bin, blocked access and graffiti.
 - Cleaning the box and picking up litter within 3 feet of the box.
 - Applying disinfectant to the box handle and other high-touch areas.
 - Removing graffiti.

What if a sharps collection box needs to be serviced outside of the twice-per-week schedule?

- Sharps collection box signage directs the public to contact Metro’s RID Patrol, which will quickly dispatch service when a box is full or jammed.

What will Metro measure during the four-year pilot expansion?

- Metro will collect data during the pilot to inform future planning efforts and determine need. Metro will regularly assess box fullness and check for garbage, litter and graffiti using a mobile device designed for ease of use and quick data entry. Furthermore, Metro intends to enhance its understanding of user experiences by conducting a survey accessible via a QR code displayed on the collection box.

What happens when the four-year pilot ends?

- Securing long-term funding to continue servicing the sharps collection boxes is essential to ensure continued availability to the public beyond the four-year pilot. If sustainable funding is not obtained, boxes may need to be removed after the pilot period.

Who do I contact to learn more?

- Contact Abby Herrera, Metro senior solid waste planner, at abigail.herrera@oregonmetro.gov or (503) 459-7119.



Sharps collection box images

