CITY & COUNTY URGE SAFE NEEDLE DISPOSAL

Over the past year, recycling facility employees have been injured by needles that were improperly placed with other recyclables. In addition to the resulting physical injury, the employees are at risk of infection from viruses such as HIV and Hepatitis.

The City of Tucson's Environmental Services Department, Pima County Department of Environmental Quality, and the Pima County Health Department are promoting safe disposal methods for needles and syringes to reduce the risk of injury to refuse and recycling center employees, as well as city and county residents.

Needles and syringes are hazardous medical waste and should be disposed of properly. To reduce the risk of needle stick injuries, the City of Tucson and Pima County are asking residents to dispose of needles and syringes in the following manner:

1. Place all needles and syringes in a secured puncture proof plastic container with a screw-on lid (for example: a rigid detergent, bleach or fabric softener bottle).
2. Clearly label the container "NON-RECYCLABLE" and dispose of it in your trash container.
3. Once filled to no more than 2 inches from the top, tightly secure the lid and reinforce with duct tape.
4. Place the container into your trash; do not place this container in with your other recyclables.

Additional recommendations to keep in mind:

- Keep your plastic container out of reach of children and pets.
- Do not use a glass container.
- Never put loose needles or syringes in the trash, blue barrels or with other recycling containers.
- Never flush needles or syringes down the toilet.

It is critical to public health and safety that needles and syringes are disposed of properly and safely. Needle stick injuries to municipal workers on the job, or to the public, are easily preventable.

For more information contact:
- City of Tucson Environmental Services at 791-3171
- Pima County Department of Environmental Quality at 724-7400
- Pima County Health Department at 243-7912 or talk with your health care provider