


Operating Requirements for Syringe Exchange Programs Authorized by the California Department Public Health, Office of AIDS

The logo for the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) features three stylized human figures in blue, orange, and green, with their arms raised in a celebratory or protective gesture. To the right of the figures, the letters "CDPH" are written in a bold, blue, sans-serif font.

The operating requirements for syringe exchange programs (SEPs) authorized by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) are outlined in California Health and Safety Code (HSC) Section 121349 and California Code of Regulations Title 17, Division 1, Chapter 4, Subchapter 15.

Organizations applying to CDPH for authorization to provide syringe services must submit the following plans with their applications.

Syringe Dispensing Plan

The Syringe Dispensing Plan describes how the program will provide supplies, including needles and syringes, to program participants. The plan must:

1. Be designed to provide new, sterile syringes to meet the needs of participants in accordance with the recommendations made by the U.S. Public Health Service, published in the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Medical Advice for Person Who Use Injection Drugs, 1997, to support the use of a new, sterile syringe for each injection; and
2. Track the number of syringes dispensed.

Syringe Collection and Sharps Waste Disposal Plan

This plan describes how the program will collect sharps waste from program participants, and how the program will dispose of sharps and other home-generated medical waste. The syringe collection and sharps waste plan must:

1. Be designed to maximize return of used syringes without increasing risk of needlestick injury to staff or program participants;
2. Track number of syringes returned in a manner that eliminates direct handling of sharps waste and does not interfere with service provision;
3. Include a needlestick injury protocol and a plan for ensuring staff and participant familiarity with the protocol;
4. Include sharps waste disposal education that ensures staff and participants are familiar with state law regulating proper disposal of home-generated sharps waste as referenced in HSC Section 118286; and
5. Include a plan and budget for sharps waste disposal, or an explanation if no cost is associated with the sharps waste disposal.

Service Delivery Plan

This plan describes how the program will deliver services, and which services will be provided, either directly or by referral. The plan must include *direct* provision of the following services:

1. Syringe exchange services;
2. HIV and viral hepatitis prevention education; and
3. Safe recovery and disposal of used syringes and sharps waste.

Data Collection and Program Evaluation Plan

The data collection and program evaluation plan describes how programs will collect and report data and evaluate the impact of their efforts. The plan must describe how the program will:

1. Incorporate evaluation data into program design, and
2. Include at minimum the following data elements:
 - a. The total number of persons served;
 - b. The total number of syringes and needles dispensed, collected and disposed of; and
 - c. The total number and types of referrals made to drug treatment and other services.

Community Relations Plan

The community relations plan must:

1. Record adverse incidents and positive interactions between local law enforcement and SEP staff, volunteers or participants in their role as program participants;
2. Document concerns and positive feedback expressed by program participants, community members, neighborhood associations and/or local law enforcement officials; and
3. Document steps the program has taken to address any reasonable concerns.

Additional Guidance

The [Guidelines for Syringe Exchange Programs Funded by the California Department of Public Health \(July, 2018\) \(PDF\)](#) outline the minimum requirements for California SEPs to be funded with OA funds or receive materials through the California Syringe Exchange Supply Clearinghouse. The Guidelines also provide information on legal requirements associated with SEP operations in California state statute and ancillary information such as the *Framework for Injection Drug User Health and Wellness* to assist local health jurisdictions and SEPs in understanding the environment in which they work, and the ways in which they can do their best work.

The CDPH/OA [Issue Brief: Syringe Access Policies for California Syringe Exchange Programs](#) summarizes scientific evidence on good practice for syringe distribution, and recommends that California syringe exchange programs adopt needs-based distribution policies with the goal of ensuring that program participants have a new, sterile syringe and other injection equipment for each injection.