



CPSC

California Product Stewardship Councilsm

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GOVERNOR BROWN SIGNS INTO LAW A STATEWIDE DRUG AND NEEDLE TAKE-BACK PROGRAM TO BE PAID FOR BY PRODUCERS

California Leads the Nation on Safe Drug and Needle Disposal with SB 212

(Sacramento, CA) – California Governor Jerry Brown signed into law SB 212 (Senator Jackson, Assemblymembers Ting and Gray), which establishes a comprehensive statewide take-back system for sharps and medications. California is first in the nation to establish a comprehensive, producer-funded take-back program to provide safe and convenient disposal options for **both** home-generated pharmaceutical drugs **and** sharps waste.

“The California Product Stewardship Council has worked tirelessly for the last 8 years to get the pharmaceutical industry to work with us to put in place a statewide take-back program,” said Heidi Sanborn, Senior Advisor and former Executive Director of the California Product Stewardship Council (CPSC). “It took passing ten county and three city ordinances and the hard work of Senator Jackson and Assembly member’s Ting and Gray as well as many others to successfully negotiate a compromise with the medical industry to make this happen. This is a public health and safety bill whose time has come and we are sincerely grateful to the Legislature and Governor Brown for making Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) the law.”

SB 212 addresses the myriad of problems that exist due to the lack of a statewide system to manage these products at the end of their useful life. Because of this bill, manufacturers of sharps, prescriptions, and over-the-counter medications will be required to create, fund, and participate in a statewide take-back system. Now California residents can address important public health concerns by having access to safe, convenient disposal methods of sharps and drugs.

While these products serve a vital need in protecting and preserving the health of Californians, this is all the more reason to also protect Californians from the inherent risks that occur when these products are unwanted and require safe disposal.

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[CalRecycle](#) estimates 936 million sharps are used by consumers in California each year, approximately 31% of those are thrown in the trash. [A study by University Mass Lowell in 2015](#) estimated 7% of needles are flushed, and needle stick injuries occur with unacceptable frequency. Improper disposal of sharps poses an unacceptable risk to many Californians, and the statewide sharps collection program contained in SB 212 will significantly reduce that risk. Another study recently completed by the [Environmental Research and Education Foundation in 2018](#) found that 4% of Material Recovery Facility workers are stuck by needles each year while doing their job.

Similarly, prescription and over the counter medications present significant problems when leftover if not properly secured and disposed of. There is no question that consumers have leftover drugs in their homes, which tend to be stockpiled, flushed, or thrown in the garbage. Leftover drugs and a lack of safe and convenient disposal options are fuel to the opioid epidemic and increase instances of accidental poisonings and can cause environmental harm.

Key provisions of SB 212:

1. Establishes comprehensive, producer-funded take-back programs to provide safe and convenient disposal options for home-generated pharmaceutical drugs and sharps waste.
2. Gets excess drugs out of people's homes, preventing accidental poisonings and abuse, which fuel the opioid epidemic.
3. Protects solid waste, parks, hotel, wastewater, sanitation, and other workers, river and beach clean-up volunteers, and the public from needle stick injuries.
4. Mandates producers of needles reimburse local governments for any needles they collect and dispose.
5. Requires retail pharmacy chains to make a reasonable effort to participate as a collector and if there are not at least 5 collection locations in a county, that 15% of store locations must be a collection location.
6. Requires producers to provide take-back bins for meds to any legal location that asks for one within 90 days.
7. Preempts future local ordinances to ensure consistency and predictability for manufacturers and allows existing ordinances to keep operating or allows them to repeal and join the state program voluntarily.

For more information about SB 212, visit www.calpsc.org

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California Product Stewardship Council (CPSC) educates both the public and private sectors about Product Stewardship and closely partners with business, jurisdictions, waste and recycling companies, manufacturers and others to promote and encourage sustainable practices and to recognize those companies who are taking a leadership role in participating in waste reduction and recycling.