

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# Waste Management Asks for Public's Help for Safe Needle Disposal

## Improper Needle Disposal is on the Rise in Tucson

**TUCSON, AZ** — January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010 — According to the CDC, each year 600,000 - 800,000 people are injured by used syringes that are improperly disposed of in waste or recycling containers. This is particularly true in Tucson, where more than 400 needles were removed from the sorting line at Waste Management's Materials Recovery Facility on Runway Ave. in December alone.

"These needles are dangerous to our employees who are working the sorting lines and separating the recycled materials by hand in many cases," said Waste Management Director of Recycling Carrie Galvan. "Our staff is in danger of getting pricked, and that is a serious health hazard."

Used needles can also pose a threat when put in the regular waste container. When not properly secured, they can fall out of trucks, trash compactors, or other areas where they are left exposed to others.

Though experts say most of these needles are used for medical purposes, they still pose the risk of infection or disease transmittal. That is why Waste Management is asking for the public's help.

"We are asking Tucsonans to find a program that allows you to properly discard used needles, Sharps, or lancets, or to follow City guidelines for disposal to minimize these risks," Galvan added.

Those guidelines instruct people to secure used needles in a puncture-proof plastic container with a screw-on lid, and to write "Not Recyclable" on the container before putting it in the waste bin. It is crucial that these containers NOT be put in the recycle bin.

Waste Management also has a convenient mail-back storage and collection program that ensures safe and proper disposal. Kits can be purchased at [www.thinkgreenfromhome.com](http://www.thinkgreenfromhome.com).

### About Waste Management

Waste management and its 980 Arizona employees provide waste and recycling services to nearly 500,000 customers throughout Arizona. For more information, go to [www.wmofarizona.com](http://www.wmofarizona.com).

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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