



Costa Mesa Sanitary District

...an Independent Special District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Scott Carroll, General Manager
Tel: 949-645-8400
Fax: 949-650-2253
Email: scarroll@cmsdca.gov

SANITARY DISTRICT AND FIRE DEPARTMENT TEAM UP TO DISTRIBUTE SHARP CONTAINERS

(Costa Mesa, CA) – The Costa Mesa Sanitary District and the City of Costa Mesa Fire Department are working together to distribute safe disposable containers to the public for needles and other medical sharp devices. The District received a one-time grant from the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) to distribute 1,200 sharp containers, but the organization was having a difficult time disseminating the containers to people who need them. “We would advertise the free sharps waste containers in the District’s newsletter, but very few Costa Mesa residents were requesting them,” said Javier Ochiqui, the District’s management analyst who is responsible for managing the Sharps Program. “We offered free sharps waste containers to the Costa Mesa Senior Center and many senior living facilities, but they declined because they already have a sharps disposal program in place”, said Ochiqui. The Costa Mesa Fire Department responds to over 10,000 incidents a year in which many of those incidents involve people that have in their possession needles or other sharp devices to meet their medical needs. These first responders see firsthand the medical devices people require



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when they enter their homes. Each fire apparatus will carry rigid, puncture resistant sharps waste containers that are made of hard red plastic with a secured lid to keep contents from falling out, and clearly marked with the bio-hazard symbol. Each container is approximately 2.2 ounces. Inside each container is a District flyer that lists the local pharmacy locations that will accept the containers at no costs to residents. The District pays for the disposal cost at an annual expense of \$15,000. Currently, there are three pharmacies in Costa Mesa that will accept the sharp containers, which are: Ramsay Rexall Drugs, Steven's Pharmacy and White Front Pharmacy. Without a safe and proper way for disposing sharps people will resort to flushing them down toilets or throwing sharps in the trash, which causes severe risk to sanitary workers being exposed to bloodborne pathogens. For more information about the District's Sharps Program, visit www.cmsdca.gov.

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