Recently a laundry container full of used needles was placed into a Spring Hill recycling bin which ruptured, causing harm to a worker at the recycling center and bringing the entire operation to a halt. The remainder of the load was not able to be processed, but rather it was shipped to the landfill, which besides injuring the worker, caused the City to incur additional charges.

Medical waste includes:
- Gastric & nasal tubes
- Intravenous bags & tubing
- Dialysis waste
- Colostomy bags
- Casts
- Catheters
- Adult diapers

According to the CDC, several hundred thousand people a year are injured from improperly discarded “sharps.” Sharps can transmit blood borne pathogens such as HIV and hepatitis B and C, and they are potentially bio-hazardous waste. When a needle is tossed into a household wastebasket, it quite often ends up sticking janitorial staff or sanitation workers, or it may be used for unintended purposes. Even a benign needle stick can trigger costly interventions, such as counseling, testing and preventive treatment. Those who handle the waste are at the highest risk, but children and pets can also be injured. Proper storage and disposal will protect the household as well as the general public from accidental injury and expense.
All medical waste must be put in a plastic garbage bag, double bagged, and placed into the trash bin the TRASH, NOT the recycling.

Contaminated wound dressings, disposable sheets and pads, gloves, and dialysis machine filters may be double-bagged in a standard plastic garbage bag and securely fastened. This material may then be combined with other household garbage for disposal.

How do I dispose of my needles or sharps?

A MedWaste Tracker™ System is a convenient way that Waste Management endorses to return used sharps safely and securely through the U.S. Postal Service.

Visit this website for more information and to obtain a dispenser:
https://www.thinkgreenfromhome.com/SyringesAndLancets.cfm

Another option to dispose of needles or sharps is: Place the objects in a high density plastic jug with the lid taped shut. “DO NOT RECYCLE” must be written with a permanent marker in large letters on the plastic jug and placed into the trash container. NEVER PLACE IN RECYCLING.

In disposing of your sharps, keep the following points in mind:

• Never dispose of sharps in ways that can injure other people, pets or wildlife.
• Do not put used needles directly into your household waste bin or any other refuse bin. Always place them into an appropriate container first.
• Never put a used sharp in a container that’s not specifically designed for sharps – such as drink cans, bottles, and plastic food boxes.
• Once you’ve put a used needle into your sharps bin, don’t try to remove it.

What is allowed in curbside recycling bins?

• Plastics #1 and #2
• Paper
• Cardboard
• Metal food cans
• Aluminum beverage cans

What is NOT allowed in curbside recycling bins?

• Medical Waste: i.e., plastic tubing, inhalers, bandages, diapers, bags, or any garbage of any kind
• Needles or “sharps”
• Aerosols of any kind
• “Tanglers”, i.e., rope, cord, chain, clothes hangers, old VHS tapes, Christmas lights... basically anything that can get tangled in the recycling system and cause damage to the machinery or the people working in the recycling plant.
• Anything that is not on the “allowed” list above could cause an entire load of recyclables to be diverted to a landfill.

The success of the City of Spring Hill’s recycling program is a community effort. It depends on EVERYONE! Thank you for joining together to ensure success!