

# BOISE SHARPS LITTER ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

# SURVEY RESULTS REPORT



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# Background



Central District Health's Drug Overdose Prevention Program and the City of Boise partnered together to gather insights from Boise's residents, businesses, and organizations about the location, frequency, and impact of syringe litter in the community.

The feedback collected through this survey will highlight areas that need attention, guiding initiatives to enhance public safety, cleanliness, and community health. Understanding the scope, location, and impact of sharps litter is vital for creating effective public health and environmental safety programs. This data helps assess the severity and extent of the issue, especially in urban settings where improperly discarded sharps pose health and safety risks. Engaging the community through surveys gives public health officials and local governments crucial insights, helping them identify problem areas, assess risks, and implement targeted interventions.

## Mapping Problem Areas and Assessing the Scope

Surveys pinpoint areas where sharps litter is frequently found, enabling city planners, health departments, and community organizations to allocate resources effectively. This information helps prioritize efforts, such as increasing the frequency of clean-ups, installing public sharps disposal bins, or organizing community events. Understanding the scale of sharps litter in specific locations supports efficient planning and resource allocation. For example, areas with high frequencies of syringe litter may benefit from enhanced monitoring, additional disposal options, or focused outreach for harm reduction services.

## Enhancing Public Safety and Minimizing Health Risks

Sharps litter, including used syringes, can present serious health hazards to residents, law enforcement, healthcare and sanitation workers. Accidental contact can expose individuals to bloodborne pathogens, including HIV and hepatitis. By surveying community members about the frequency and volume of sharps litter, officials can make well-informed decisions on resource allocation that enhances public safety. Placing sharps disposal boxes in strategic locations and focusing clean-up efforts on high-risk areas can reduce the chance of accidental needle sticks. Moreover, understanding the extent of the issue helps communities educate the public on safe disposal practices, leading to a safer environment.

## Supporting Harm Reduction and Broader Public Health Goals

Data collected from surveys on sharps litter can guide harm reduction and public health programs. Knowledge about the locations and frequency of discarded syringes can help assess the need for harm reduction services, such as syringe exchange programs, safe injection sites, and further outreach for those impacted by substance use. Surveys create a comprehensive view of how sharps litter affects daily life, allowing community leaders to advocate for tailored resources to address the community's needs.

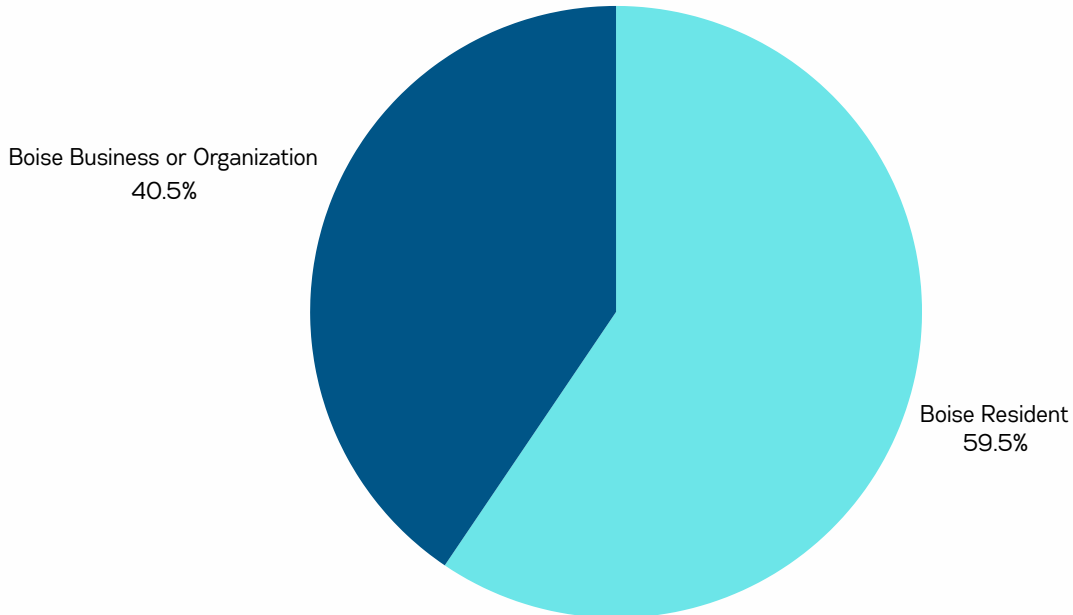
## Building Community Engagement and Strong Partnerships

Surveying residents and businesses fosters community involvement and collaboration. Local stakeholders—business owners, residents, and organizations—are engaged in addressing this issue collectively. Those who frequently encounter sharps litter can feel more invested in developing solutions, leading to increased support for public health initiatives and safer disposal practices. This collective effort can sustain and strengthen ongoing efforts to reduce sharps litter, improving public health outcomes and building support for harm reduction policies and services.

# Results



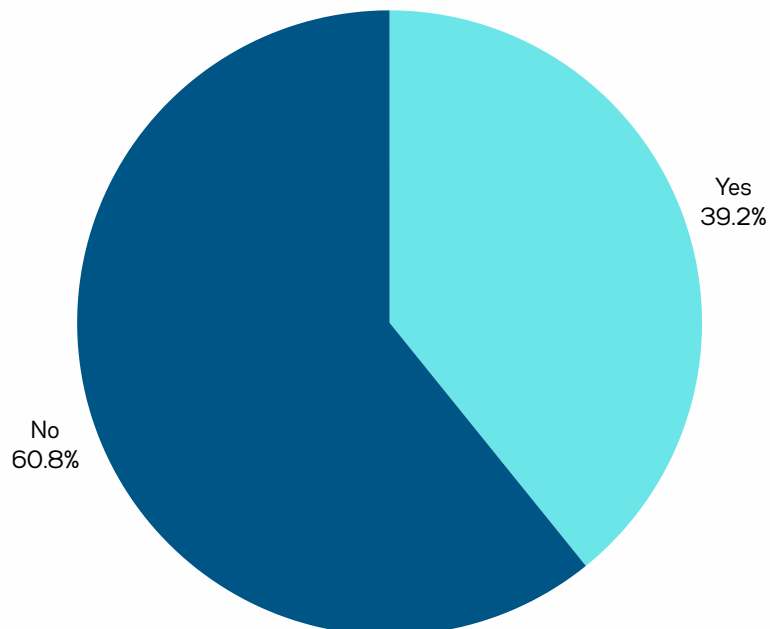
1) Please identify the option that best suites you.



## Synopsis

Out of seventy-four (74) responses, forty-four (44) submissions were from a Boise resident with thirty (30) representing a Boise-based organization or business.

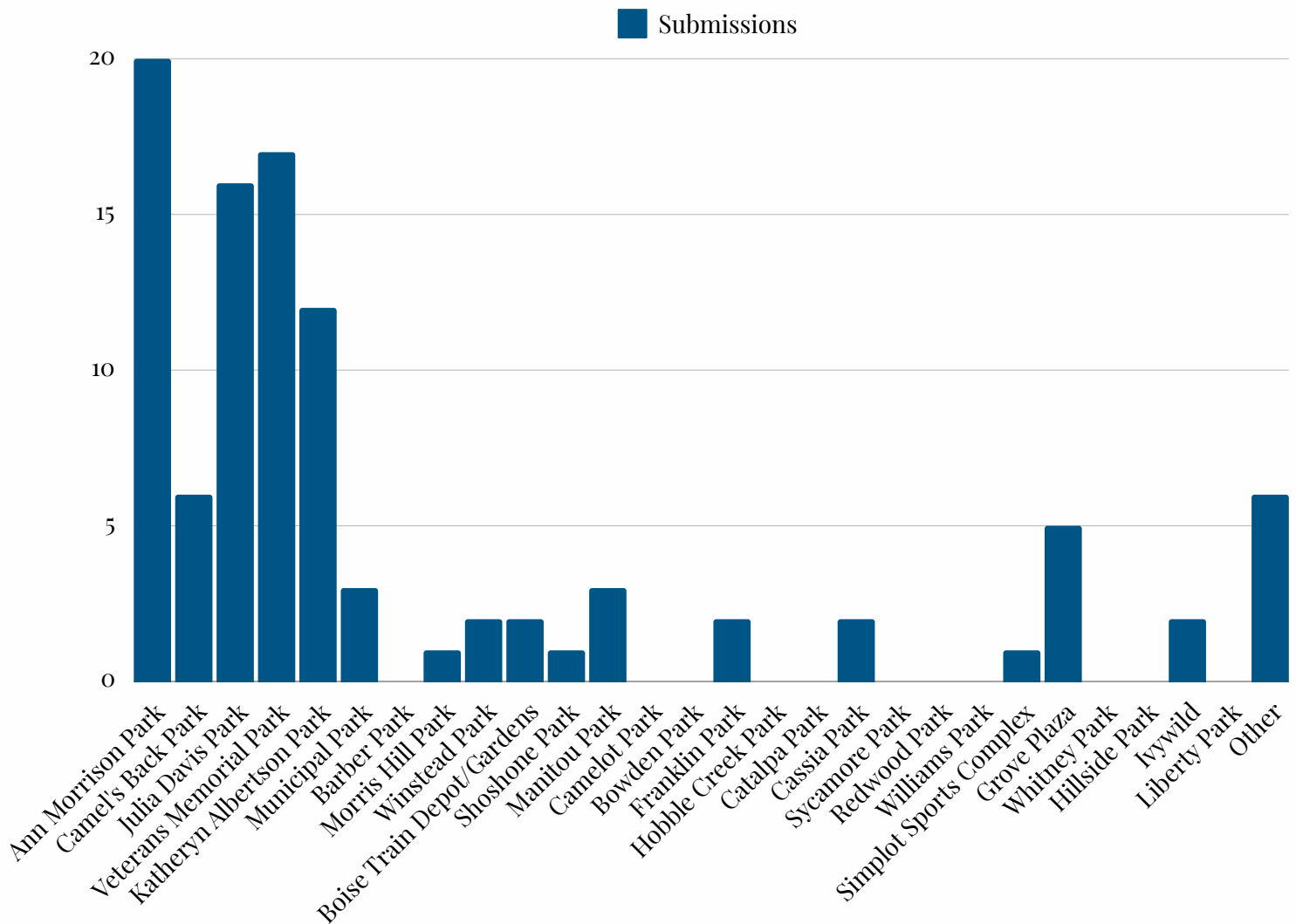
2) Have you seen sharps litter in Boise parks?



# Results



3) In what public park(s) have you seen sharps litter?



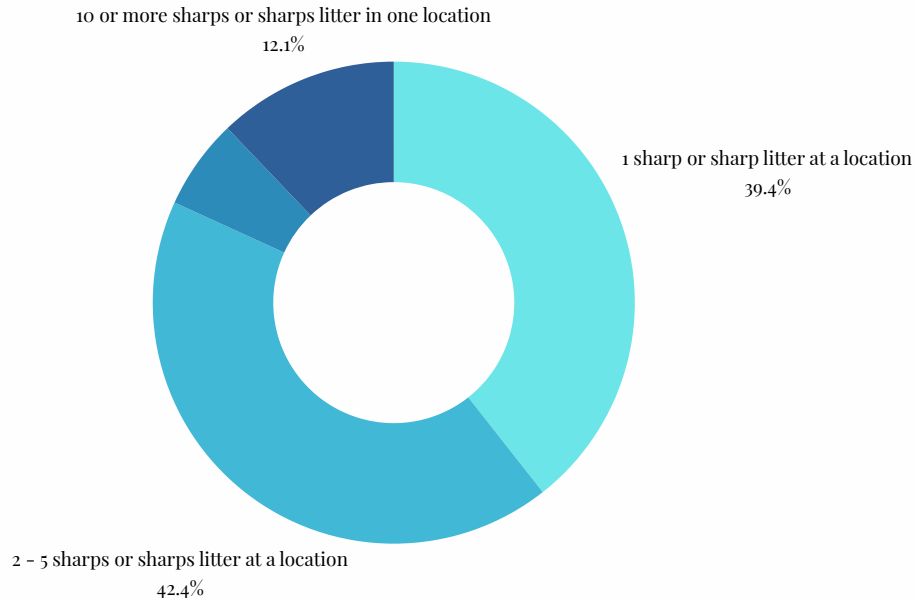
## Synopsis

Most participants indicated they have not encountered sharps litter in a Boise park, with forty-five (45) submissions reporting this. Among those who did encounter sharps litter, twenty (20) reported seeing it at Ann Morrison Park. Seventeen (17) submissions noted sharps litter at Veterans Memorial Park, followed by Julia Davis Park with sixteen (16) submissions and Kathryn Albertson Park with twelve (12) submissions. It's important to note that respondents could identify encountering sharps litter in multiple locations.

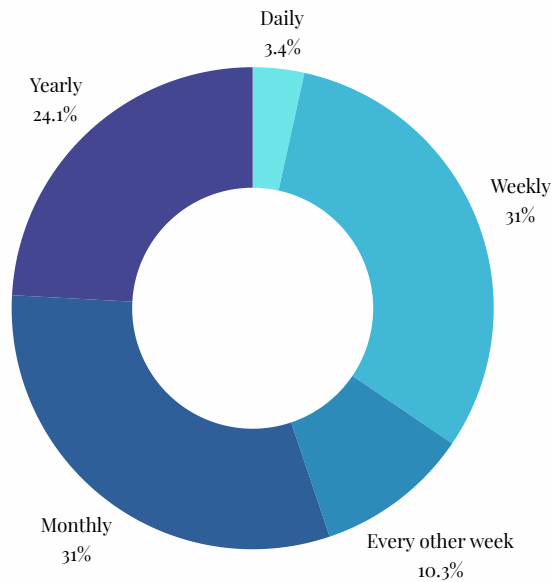
# Results



4) What was the quantity of sharps litter that you saw in a Boise park?



5) How frequently do you see sharps litter at the park(s)?



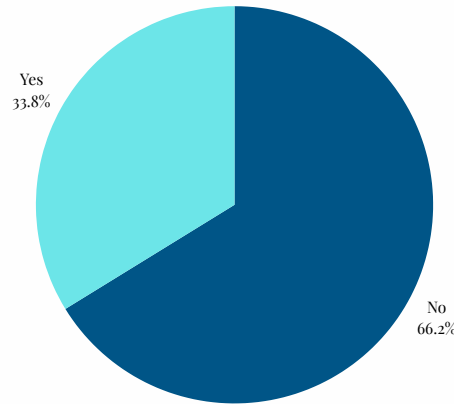
## Synopsis

Most participants indicated the volume of sharps litter they encountered was between two and five sharps at fourteen (14) submissions, followed by thirteen (13) submissions stating they encountered one sharp or sharp litter. Most respondents indicated they encountered sharps litter either weekly or monthly, with both results receiving nine (9) submissions, followed by yearly at seven (7) submissions.

# Results



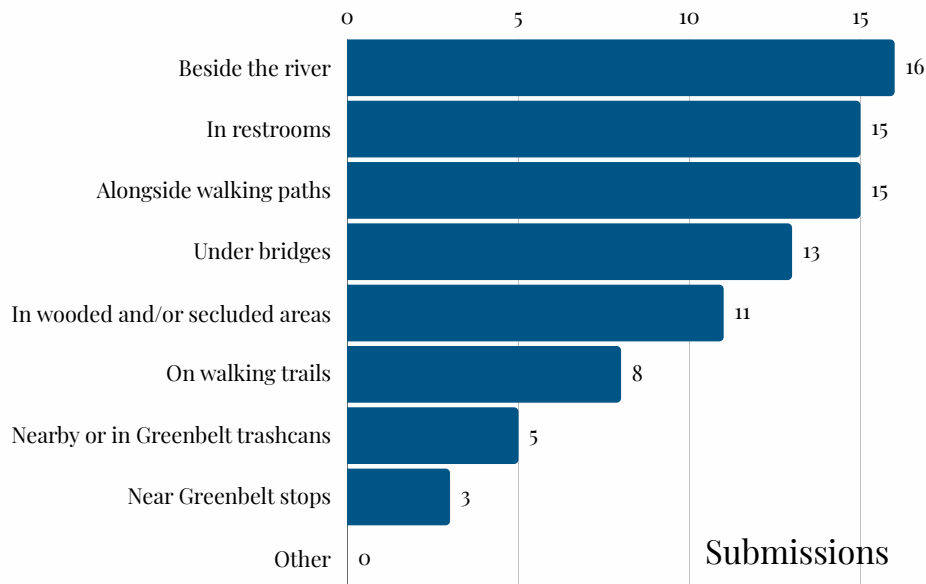
6) Have you seen sharps litter on the Boise Greenbelt?



## Synopsis

Most participants reported that they have not seen sharps litter on the Boise Greenbelt, accounting for forty-nine (49) submissions, or 66% of the survey responses.

7) How frequently do you see sharps litter at the park(s)?



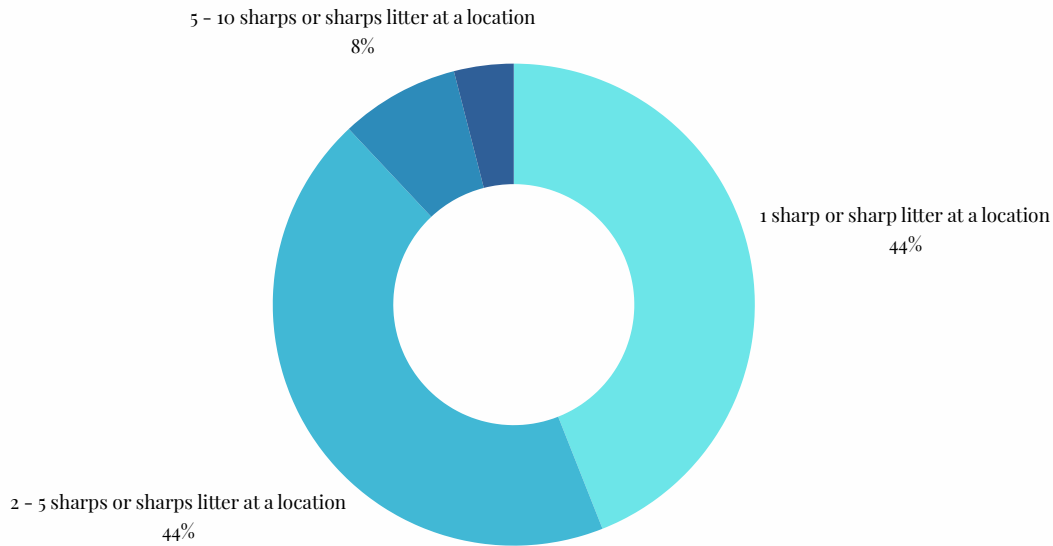
## Synopsis

For participants who did see sharps litter on the Boise Greenbelt, they could identify multiple locations. Most respondents reported seeing sharps litter beside the river, with sixteen (16) submissions, followed by fifteen (15) submissions each for areas alongside walking paths and in restrooms.

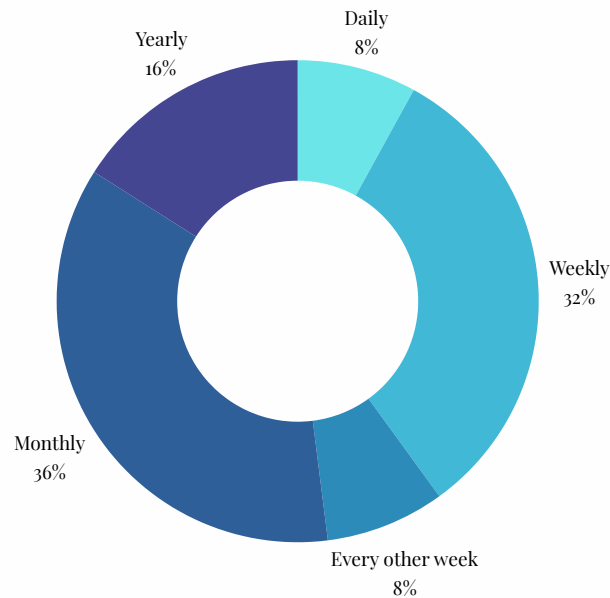
# Results



8) What was the quantity of sharps you saw on the Greenbelt?



9) How frequently do you see sharps on the Greenbelt?



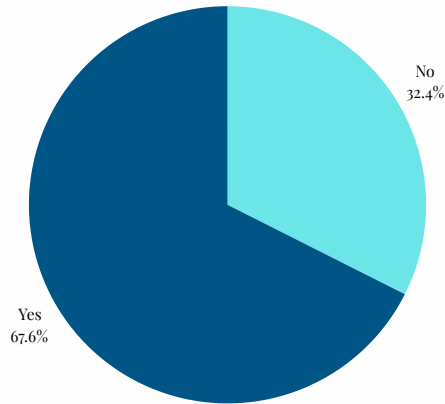
## Synopsis

For participants who did see sharps litter on the Greenbelt, an equal number of respondents reported encountering either one sharp or sharps litter or between two and five sharps or sharps litter, with eleven (11) submissions for each category.

# Results



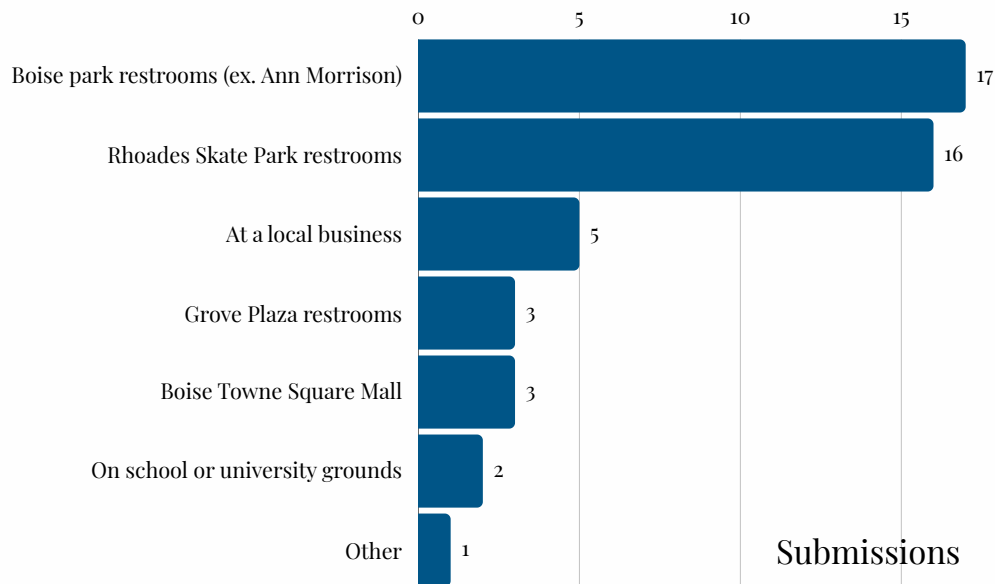
10) Have you seen sharps litter in any Boise public restrooms?



## Synopsis

Most participants reported that they have not seen any sharps litter in a Boise public restroom, with fifty (50) submissions accounting for 67.5% of the total responses.

11) Where did you see sharps litter in public restrooms?



## Synopsis

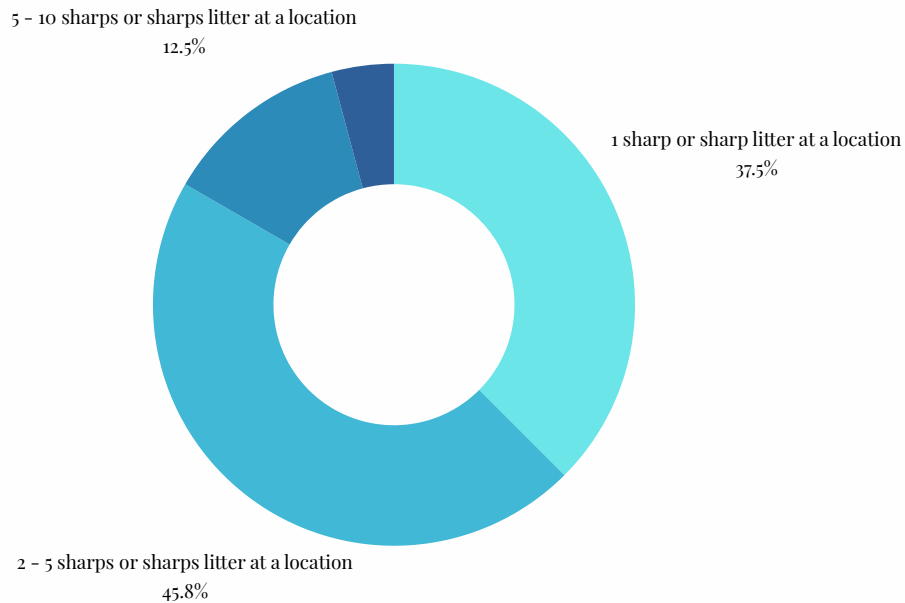
Participants who reported seeing sharps litter in a public restroom in Boise were able to identify multiple locations where they encountered it. Most responses noted restrooms in Boise parks, with seventeen (17) submissions, followed by sixteen (16) submissions indicating sharps litter in the restrooms at Rhoades Skate Park.



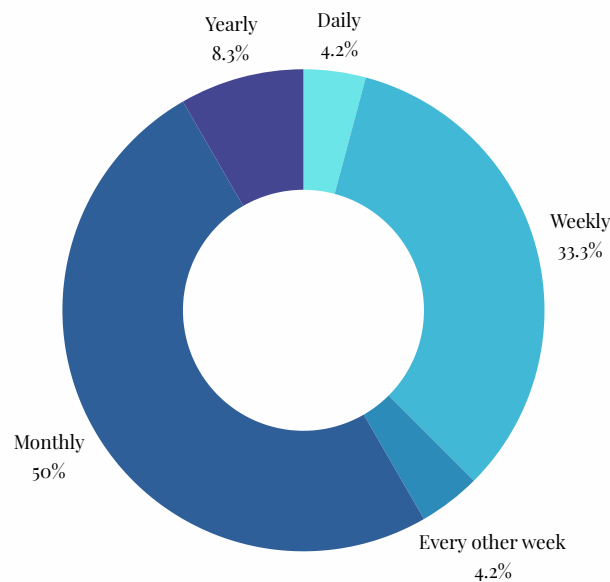
# Results



12) What was the quantity of sharps litter that you saw in a Boise public restroom?



13) What is the frequency that you see sharps litter in a Boise public restroom?



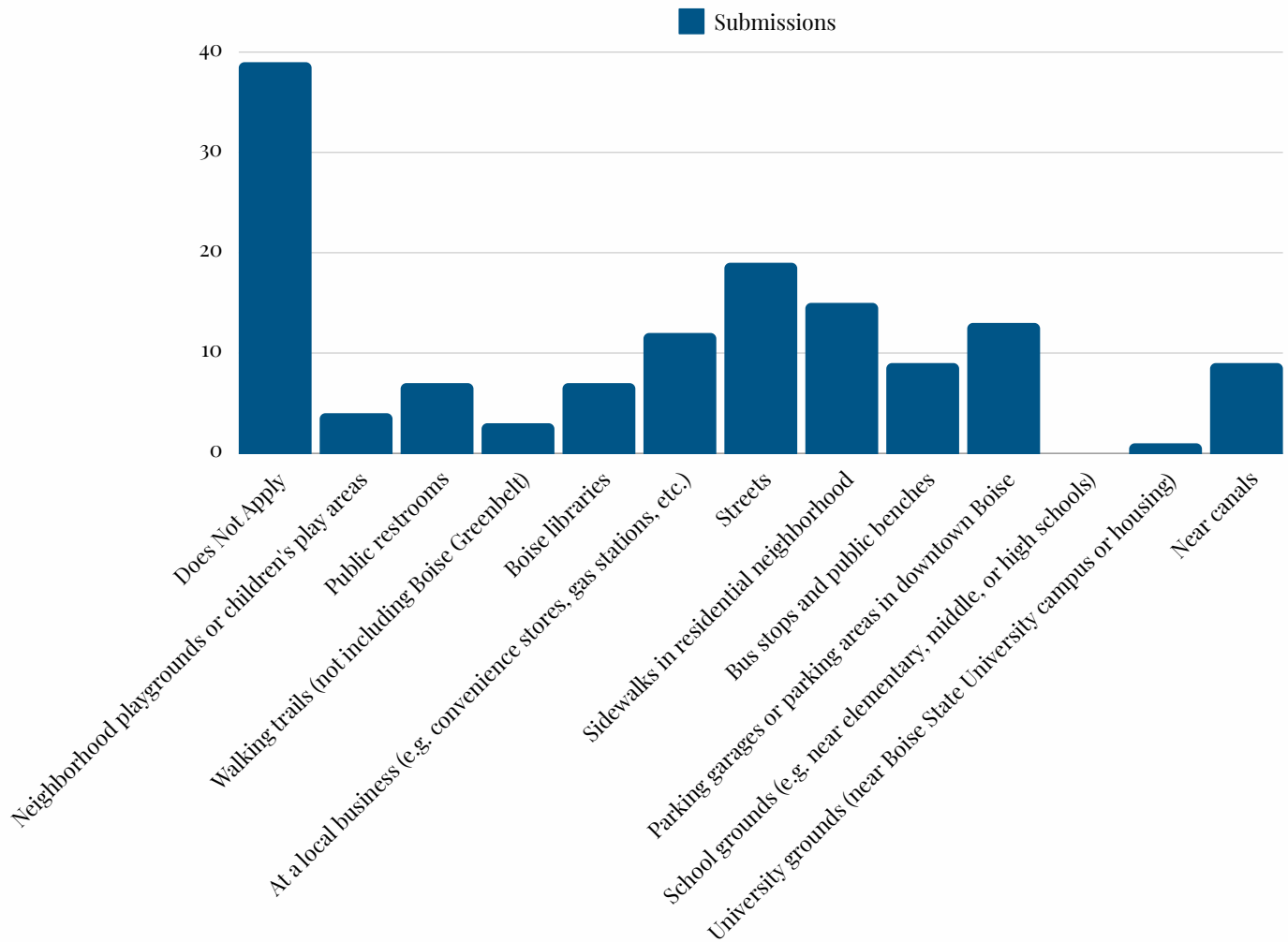
## Synopsis

Most participants reported encountering two to five pieces of sharps litter in a Boise public restroom, with eleven (11) submissions, followed by nine (9) submissions indicating they saw one sharp or sharps litter. Additionally, twelve (12) submissions noted that participants saw sharps litter monthly, while eight (8) submissions indicated they saw it weekly.

# Results



## 14) Where else have you seen sharps litter in Boise?



### Synopsis

Most participants selected "does not apply," with thirty-nine (39) submissions. The second highest responses were for streets, with nineteen (19) submissions, followed by sidewalks in residential neighborhoods at fifteen (15), park garages or parking areas at thirteen (13), and local businesses at twelve (12) submissions. Both canals and bus stops and public benches, received nine (9) submissions each. This was followed by Boise libraries and public restrooms, which both garnered seven (7) submissions. Neighborhood playgrounds or children's play areas received four (4) submissions, while walking trails, excluding the Boise Greenbelt, had three (3) submissions, and one respondent reported seeing sharps litter near the University grounds by Boise State.

# Results



15) Please provide additional information on where you saw sharps litter or write N/A. Please provide information on the quantity and frequency of sharps litter.

Submissions	Coding
I've seen sharps litter in the restrooms where I have soccer games off of Canal street on Vista in Boise.	Vista area
Vista/Nez Perce	Vista area
At least annually, I will find sharps litter near homeless encampments or areas frequented by homeless individuals such as remote vacant lots or isolated areas near roadways.	Areas with people experiencing homelessness
I have been told by residents in finding sharps in the street around Morris Hill cemetery and the neighborhoods. We occasionally see citizen calls who find them lying around in a residential setting.	Boise Bench
Anywhere near the shelters and terry reilly clinics. The bus stop and Flying J, any of the hotels near 3300 S Vista, the airport hotels. Basically anywhere the indigent population hangs out or lives. There are too many places to list. Any Boise city housing projects.	Vista area; Areas with people experiencing homelessness
A few years ago, someone dumped a bunch of sharps litter in our neighborhood	
I haven't seen that many sharps out in public, its always been one off incidents.	
Fishing downstream of Capital bridge to 36th. Along the river paths and under the bridges, by homeless camps	Greenbelt; Areas with people experiencing homelessness

# Results



15) Please provide additional information on where you saw sharps litter or write N/A. Please provide information on the quantity and frequency of sharps litter.  
Continued from page 9.

## Submissions

## Coding

<p>I am a Boise police officer assigned to the bicycle patrol unit. We patrol parks and Greenbelt areas within the city. I committed It come across sharps in parks and on/near the Greenbelt on a weekly basis. It has become a public nuisance to combat the public safety risk and degradation to the environment with the sharps left behind. We have to abate the sharps litter using a third party contract company at the expense of the tax payers due to multiple community organizations supplying individuals with large quantities of syringes for non-medically approved uses.</p>	<p>Greenbelt</p>
<p>North Raymond St 83704 twice</p>	<p>Boise Bench</p>
<p>Our problem is with our transients! Where ever they congregate and the city coddles and allows it you see this issue. The green belt is disgusting once you leave the paths. I'm glad I don't live in Boise. City cares more about letting transients do dope and leave garbage than take care of productive citizens.</p>	<p>Greenbelt; Areas with people experiencing homelessness</p>
<p>There are a lot of sharps litter behind the Hillcrest Library in the parking lot and in the bushes surrounding the parking lot.</p>	<p>Boise Bench</p>
<p>I am a [redacted]. Before this, I was a paramedic responding to 911 calls throughout the city. I have really only seen sharps litter in people's homes and vehicles.</p>	
<p>One or two sharps per year in my front yard (Milwaukee/Fairview).</p>	<p>West Bench</p>
<p>as you're coming down the greenbelt path that connects orchard, right before the red bridge</p>	<p>Greenbelt</p>
<p>Kendall Street, Irving</p>	<p>Boise Bench</p>
<p>Hotels on elder and sunrise rim. On the exterior and interior of hotels.</p>	<p>Boise Bench</p>

# Results



15) Please provide additional information on where you saw sharps litter or write N/A. Please provide information on the quantity and frequency of sharps litter.  
*Continued from page 11 and 12.*

## Overview

18 – Not applicable  
8 – Boise Bench (Hillcrest Library, Morris Hill, Central Rim, Central Bench)  
4 – Have not encountered sharps litter  
4 – Greenbelt areas  
4 – Areas with people experiencing homelessness  
1 – West Bench (Milwaukee/Fairview)  
/ 39 submissions

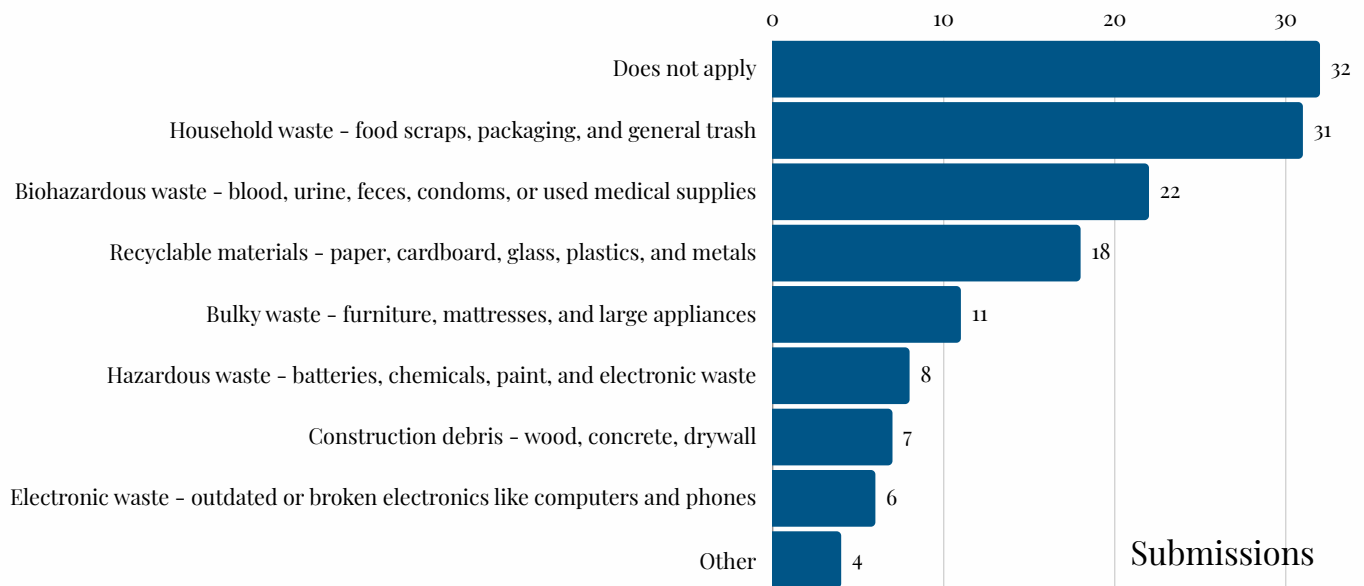
## Synopsis

Thirty-nine (39) participants answered this section of the sharps litter environmental survey, with eighteen (18) indicating "not applicable" when asked to identify other areas where they had seen sharps litter that were not previously mentioned. Eight (8) submissions noted locations on the Boise Bench, including Hillcrest Library, Morris Hill, Central Rim, and Central Bench. Three (3) submissions specifically identified the Vista area of the Boise Bench. Additionally, four (4) submissions pointed out areas along the Boise Greenbelt, and another four (4) submissions mentioned areas with people experiencing homelessness.

# Results



16) What forms of waste have you seen alongside sharps litter?



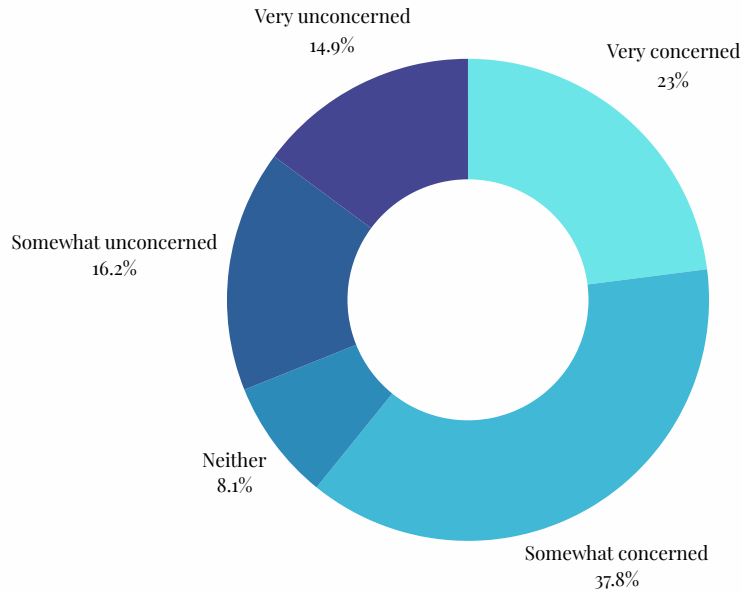
## Synopsis

Most respondents selected "does not apply" when asked about other forms of waste alongside sharps litter, with thirty-two (32) submissions. This was followed by thirty-one (31) submissions reporting that they saw sharps litter mixed with household waste. Twenty-two (22) submissions noted the presence of sharps litter alongside biohazardous waste, while eighteen (18) submissions indicated that they saw sharps litter with recyclable materials.

# Results



17) How concerned are you about sharps litter in your neighborhood or local amenities?



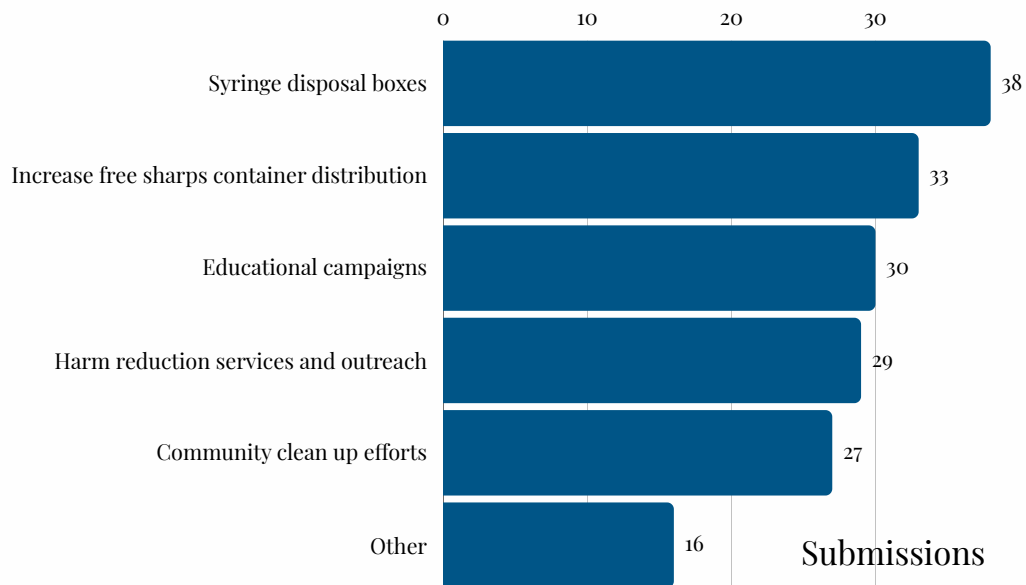
## Synopsis

Forty-five (45) respondents indicated they were very concerned or somewhat concerned about sharps litter at 61% of all submissions. Twenty-three (23) of seventy-four (74) participants stated they were somewhat unconcerned or very unconcerned.

# Results



18) What actions would you like to see taken to address sharps litter in your community?



## Synopsis

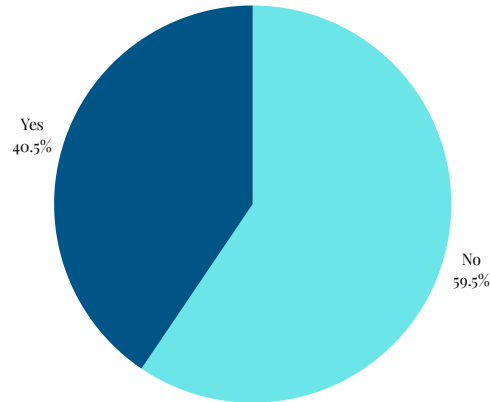
Participants of the sharps litter environmental survey could indicate multiple activities that they would support to address sharps litter. The most popular response was syringe disposal boxes with thirty-eight (38) submissions, followed by increasing free sharps container distribution at thirty-three (33) submissions. Thirty (30) submissions indicated they would like to see an educational campaign followed by twenty-nine (29) submissions indicating harm reduction services and outreach.



# Results



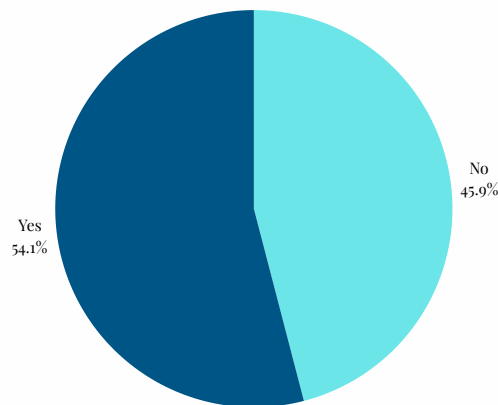
19) Do you know where to access free sharps containers in your community?



## Synopsis

Forty-four (44) participants of the survey reported they did not know where to access free sharps containers. Thirty (30) participants indicated that they did know where to access free sharps containers.

20) Do you know where to drop off sharps for proper disposal?



## Synopsis

Forty (40) participants or 54% of survey respondents indicated they knew where to drop off sharps for proper disposal, however thirty-four (34) survey respondents did not know where to drop off sharps for proper disposal.

# Results



## Conclusion

The Boise Sharps Litter Environmental Scan Survey revealed that Boise residents completed the survey more frequently than businesses or organizations. The survey categorized areas where sharps litter was observed into four groups: Boise parks, the Greenbelt, public restrooms, and others. In all categories, more participants reported not seeing sharps litter compared to those who did. Among the areas surveyed, syringe litter was most commonly reported in parks, followed by the Greenbelt and public restrooms. Ann Morrison Park had the highest number of responses, totaling twenty (20) submissions. Respondents who reported seeing syringe litter in parks typically noted two to five sharps or pieces of litter, with one sharp or sharp litter being the second most common response. While thirty-two (32) respondents indicated they did not see other types of waste alongside sharps, thirty-one (31) reported encountering household waste mixed with sharps.

Forty-five (45) respondents, representing 61% of all submissions, expressed that they were either very concerned or somewhat concerned about sharps litter. The survey indicated strong support for the installation of sharps disposal containers, followed by a desire for increased free distribution of sharps containers. Additionally, forty (40) participants, or 54% of those surveyed, reported knowing where to drop off sharps for proper disposal, while thirty-four (34) respondents were unaware of appropriate drop-off locations or proper disposal methods.

## Recommendations

Based on feedback from Boise residents and businesses, it is recommended to install publicly accessible sharps disposal boxes at key community locations, including Ann Morrison Park, followed by Veterans Memorial Park, Julia Davis Park, and Kathryn Albertson Park. Additionally, since thirty (30) submissions indicated support for an educational campaign, launching an initiative to educate the community on the proper disposal methods for sharps could be beneficial. This campaign could address topics including the proper disposal of filled sharps containers in designated disposal boxes, safe disposal methods for sharps in residential trash, and how to obtain free sharps containers.