



SPONY

THE SMALL PROPERTY OWNERS OF NEW YORK

Small Property Owners of New York (SPONY) agrees that the improper disposal of needles and other sharps is a serious safety hazard. Building owners, superintendents, porters, and other staff encounter the same danger as DSNY workers when handling residential refuse.

Our concern is that increasing penalties against property owners does not address the source of the problem. Owners generally have no control over what tenants or passersby place in trash bags or building receptacles.

If the expectation is that owners or building staff should find and remove improperly discarded needles before collection, that would require them to inspect or sort through refuse containing potentially exposed sharps. That does not eliminate the danger; it simply transfers the risk of needle-stick injuries from DSNY workers to superintendents, porters, and property owners.

Penalties should be directed at the person who improperly disposes of regulated household waste, not automatically at the owner of the property where it is later found.

Rather than focusing on fines, we suggest stronger public education, accessible safe-disposal options, and enforcement against identifiable violators. DSNY should educate New Yorkers about the proper disposal of sharps and clearly identify convenient drop-off locations, including participating pharmacies. The Department should also consider dedicated sharps drop-off bins throughout the city, similar to collection programs for compost and hazardous materials such as e-waste, chemicals, and batteries.

We urge DSNY to revise its enforcement approach so that building owners and staff are not penalized for conduct they did not commit and cannot safely prevent. Our team would be happy to meet with the DSNY team to discuss education and enforcement improvements that can enable safe working conditions for property managers and sanitation staff alike.

Regards,

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