



ECKERD COLLEGE

Safe Operating Procedure

(12/03)

SHARPS (INFECTIOUS and NON-INFECTIOUS) – HANDLING AND DISPOSING

Sharps are items that can easily puncture the skin. Examples include needles, razor blades, and broken glass. All sharps must be handled and disposed of in a manner that protects you and others from exposure and possible injury. Although you are finished with a sharp and have thrown it away, if it is disposed of improperly, another employee may come in contact with the sharp and suffer an injury. Refer to the NAS SOP **Potentially Infectious Sharps, Handling and Disposal** if you are using and disposing sharps that are contaminated with potentially infectious material.

Non-Infectious Sharps Handling

- Substitute plastic ware for glassware whenever possible.
- Routinely inspect glassware and remove from service items that are damaged, starred, cracked, or chipped.
- Do not handle sharp objects (i.e., broken glass) with bare hands. Use tongs, brooms and dustpans, or similar equipment.
- Do not leave unprotected sharps (i.e., razor blades, scalpel tips, etc.) on bench tops.
- Do not store sharps, including forceps, loose in a drawer. Lacerations can occur when an employee reaches into a drawer and comes in contact with an unsecured sharp. Forceps tips can be protected in a small piece of tubing. Other sharps should be confined to their original packaging.
- Use needle syringes only when absolutely necessary. If a needle syringe is absolutely necessary to the procedure, use a syringe that automatically re-sheathes the needle.
- Never try to recap the needle of a syringe. You might accidentally puncture yourself.
- In the event of a needle stick injury, seek medical attention immediately. Contact your supervisor and complete a First Report of Alleged Occupational Injury or Illness Report form.

- Appropriate containers are available in all immediate work areas. These are blue and white box type containers that are rigid, leak and puncture proof, sealable, and labeled as “Sharps.”
- Place the sealed container in the regular trash.

Infectious Sharps Handling

- Ensure that appropriate sharps containers are available in the immediate work area. These are small white pouches with a “Biohazard” symbol affixed.
- Use the sharps container to dispose of broken glass, used syringes, and other items that could readily penetrate the skin.
- Contaminated sharps cannot be placed in the normal trash until effectively decontaminated, usually by steam autoclaving. Use autoclave indicator tape to demonstrate decontamination. (Note: Disinfected sharps must still be placed in a puncture resistant container, as noted above).
- You may mix non-infectious sharps with potentially infectious sharps if and only if the entire contents of the container is treated as infectious and it is decontaminated before disposal, as described above.
- Deface the biohazard symbol after treating and prior to disposal.
- Place the sealed and defaced container in the regular trash.