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.