Sharps Safety

For the purposes of this webpage, sharps refer to any object or device with sharp edges or points that can puncture or cut the skin with a focus on clinical, laboratory and animal surgical applications. This could include items such as:

- scalpels, lancets or blades used in animal surgery, clinical or laboratory activities,
- needles for research, teaching or clinical activities,
- needles for personal use e.g., insulin injections,
- edges of glass ampoules that are snapped open to access medications, and

For guidance on disposal of other sharp objects such as kitchen knives, and power tool blades refer to the UofG Waste Wizard [1]. Disposal of these sharp objects should generally involve placing within a cardboard box, taping securely, labelling as “sharp objects” and disposing in the garbage.

This webpage provides links to information and guidelines on the proper use, handling, and disposal of sharps at the University. It includes the types of sharps commonly used in research and medical procedures, safe sharps alternatives, the appropriate personal protective equipment to wear when handling sharps, and the procedures for safe sharps disposal.

Sharps used in research, teaching or clinical activities are often exposed to potentially hazardous materials such as human or animal fluids, so particular attention needs to be paid to prevent sharps related injuries. Departments and supervisors should consider whether the use of sharps can be eliminated or substituted for safer devices. Departments whose employees or students handle sharps must have appropriate procedures and training for handling and disposing of sharps and the response to potential exposure should an incident occur.

Training Tools, Tips and Posters

Sharps Safety poster (General) [2]

Sharps Safety poster (Lab) [3]

CDC - Safer Sharps Alternatives poster [4]

Programs and Guidelines

Biosafety Manual, Section 7.3 Sharps [5]

Hazardous Waste Disposal procedures [6]

Safe Sharps for Biohazardous Activities

Laboratory Safety Manual, Section 18.4.7 [7]

Additional Resources and Weblinks

Detailed information on the hazards, risks and causes associated with Needlesticks and Sharps Injuries [8] is proved by Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health provides additional information on how Needlestick

Injuries are Preventable [9] and what to do if you experience a needlestick injury.

O. Reg. 474/07 Needle Safety [10] – outlines the requirement for safety engineered sharps when workers are using hollow-bore needles in hospitals as defined in the Public or Private Hospitals Act, Homewood Health Centre, or locations providing human health care such as medical labs, psychiatric facilities or long-term care facilities and thus applies to human clinical situations such as those within Student Health Services and should be considered in other University activities, particularly those involving the use of biohazards.

Source URL:https://www.uoguelph.ca/hr/about-hr/environmental-health-safety-ehs/ehs-programs-policies-guidelines-and-forms/ehs-guidelines-0

Links
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