

SAFE WORK PROCEDURE Handling and Disposing of Sharps

Purpose: To ensure students and faculty are able to handle and dispose of “sharps” safely.

Examples of “Sharps”:

- Needles
- Scalpel blades
- Suture material with needles
- Glass vials
- Any other sharp objects that may have been in contact with blood and body fluids

Principles:

1. **Always** have hand washing facilities available – sink/soap/hand sanitizer.
2. **Always** choose single-use safety engineered syringes if possible.
3. **Never** recap needles.
4. **Do not** separate needles and syringes – discard as a single unit.
5. **Do not** purposefully bend, break or remove a needle from the syringe.
6. If needle and syringe are inadvertently separated, **use forceps** to dispose of needle.
7. **Never** dispose of sharps in the regular garbage.
8. **Do not** use a sharps container that is more than $\frac{3}{4}$ (three quarters).
9. **Do not** attempt to open a sharps container that has been locked closed.

Handling and Disposing of Sharps

1. Ensure you have a sharps container within easy reach.
2. Place all sharps at the upper end of the procedure tray, pointed away from you to avoid an accidental injury.
3. When the procedure is completed, ensure that no one is between you and the sharps container.
4. Discard all used syringes (including single-use injector syringes) as a single unit.
5. Using forceps, remove the blade from a non-disposable scalpel handle without breaking the blade.
6. Place used sharps in the sharps container with the **sharp end pointed away from you.**
7. Do not insert fingers into the opening of the sharps container.
8. When finished, wash hands with soap and water or clean hands with a hand sanitizer.
9. Before leaving the work space, ensure that all sharps are disposed of correctly.
10. Before leaving the work space, ensure that all spills are appropriately cleaned.