

Laboratory Safety Information Sheet 7

The Handling and use of Sharps Instructions for Students

All staff and student should take precautions to prevent injuries caused by needle, scalpels and other sharp instruments or devices during procedures, when cleaning instrument, during the disposal of used needles, and when handling sharp instruments and equipment during and after procedures. Further information is contained in the School Sharps Management and Injury Protocol document.

When using or producing sharps in the laboratory, the following guidelines should be followed:

1. Students are to receive instruction and demonstration in the correct handling and disposal of sharps before any use of sharps is undertaken.
2. Where sharps are being used when dealing with potentially infectious or infectious materials, with all body fluids and substances, or with chemicals or drugs, the sharps should be treated as potentially infectious and should be disposed of accordingly.
3. Sharps must be placed in a special Sharps Container (a yellow receptacle labelled "Medical Sharps Waste" or "Infectious Waste" with a universal biohazard symbol displayed).
4. **Do not place sharp objects in general waste receptacles.**
5. Needles should never be recapped, purposely bent, or broken by hand, or otherwise manipulated by hand.
6. Needles should never be removed from disposable syringes. The syringe and needle (intact) should be disposed of immediately after use into a sharp receptacle.
7. In situations where the syringe needs to be retained and needle removed, denotching devices must be used to remove the needle directly into the sharps bin.
8. In situations where needles and scalpel blades need to be resheathed, resheathing or shielding instruments must be employed, or the sheath/cap may be placed horizontally on a flat surface and the needle or scalpel inserted into the sheath/cap with one hand.
9. Any detached needles that have not been discarded should be picked up by forceps or tongs and disposed of in the sharps bin.
10. Do not place your hands in a sharps container.
11. Never remove objects from a sharps container.
12. Do not force sharps into a sharps container.

You are responsible for the correct disposal of any sharps that you generate.