

RISK CONTROL CONSULTING

Sharps Safety for Non-Healthcare Workers

Sharps present a very serious risk to room attendants, housekeeping, custodians and everyone who handles waste. Custodians, waste handlers and landfill employees have been injured from loose and improperly contained waste sharps. Remember, sharps are often used with hazardous materials and human blood, so a sharps injury can also result in a harmful exposure and may lead to a serious disease. Because contamination may not be readily apparent, all waste sharps must be properly contained to minimize the risk of injury and exposure.

What are "Sharps"?

Sharps are any needles, syringes, scalpels, broken glass or razor blades that are capable of cutting or puncturing the skin. This can also include metal, dental wire or broken lab tubes.



What to do if you find "Sharps"?

- If you find a discarded syringe, you must assume that the syringe may have been used by a person infected with a bloodborne disease. Therefore you must be sure not to bend, shear, break or recap the needle.
- Use a dustpan and a broom or brush to sweep the needle into the dustpan. The needle should then be placed into a "Sharps" container.
- When emptying trash, do not use your hands to compress the trash in the bag. Trash containers may contain broken glass, improperly disposed syringes, or other sharp material.
- Never reach into a trash container or use your hands to press down on the trash bag to avoid the possibility that you could be stuck with a needle or other sharp object.
- Carry the trash bag away from your body so that there is no possibility of having a needle break through and pierce your skin.
- Never pack trash down with your hands or feet.
- Never pick up sharp objects, scrap metal, or broken glass with bare hands.
- Use "glass-only" boxes for disposal of noncontaminated broken glass.



What happens if you have an exposure?

- Immediately wash exposed area with soap and water and seek medical attention.
- Report the incident to your supervisor.

RISK CONTROL CONSULTING

This Tribal First Risk Control Consulting fact sheet is not intended to be exhaustive. The discussion and best practices suggested herein should not be regarded as legal advice. Readers should pursue legal counsel or contact their insurance providers to gain more exhaustive advice. For more information on this topic, please contact Tribal First Risk Control Consulting at (888) 737-4752 or riskcontrol@tribalfirst.com.