

# Blood-borne Pathogens: Sharps Disposal Procedure

Department: Chemical and General Safety

Program: Blood-borne Pathogens

Owner: Program Manager, Tom Rizzi

Authority: ES&H Manual, Chapter 46, Blood-borne Pathogens

The procedure for handling sharps disposal containers is

- Sharps containers will be inspected regularly and replaced when they are two-thirds full. Closed sharps containers are taken to the Medical Department for disposal. The Medical Department maintains a contract with a vendor for disposal of all medical wastes.
- Contaminated sharps will be discarded immediately or as soon as possible in containers that are closable, puncture-resistant, leak proof on sides and bottoms, and appropriately labeled or color-coded.
- Sharps disposal containers will be available at the Medical Department in the treatment, EKG, and examination rooms. Sharps containers will be made available to other SLAC employees for emergency use.
- Broken glassware that may be contaminated will only be picked up using mechanical means, such as a brush and dustpan.
- Contaminated needles and other contaminated sharps will not be bent, recapped, or removed unless the employer can demonstrate that no alternative is feasible or that such action is required by a specific medical or dental procedure.
- Such bending, recapping, or needle removal must be accomplished through the use of a mechanical device or a one-handed technique.
- Eating, drinking, smoking, applying cosmetics or lip balm, and handling contact lenses are prohibited in work areas where there is a reasonable likelihood of occupational exposure.
- Food and drink will not be kept in refrigerators, freezers, shelves, cabinets, or on countertops or bench tops where blood or other potentially infectious materials are present. Refrigerators, freezers, and areas where potentially infectious materials are present, should be labeled with wording to the effect that food is not allowed in those areas.
- All procedures involving blood or other potentially infectious materials will be performed in such a manner as to minimize splashing, spraying, spattering, and generation of droplets of these substances.
- Mouth pipetting/suctioning of blood or other potentially infectious materials is prohibited.
- Anyone cleaning up blood or other potentially infectious materials (OPIM) should clean the affected area with disinfectant materials as soon as practical. All materials used in the clean up should be disposed of as medical waste.