



HANDLING NEEDLES AND SYRINGES

Careless handling of needles, syringes and other sharps not only jeopardizes your personal safety but also the safety of laboratory support personnel such as custodians and hazardous waste disposal personnel. Extreme caution should always be used when handling and disposing of laboratory sharps.

Contaminated needles and syringes have been described in several studies as the most frequent cause of hazardous exposures to biological agents. They have also been called the most hazardous equipment used in most laboratories. Improper handling of contaminated sharps can cause infections from accidental inoculation, exposure to contaminated aerosols, and other types of serious physical injury. Please adhere to the following rules when handling needles and syringes:

1. **Never dispose of needles or syringes directly into regular waste containers.**
2. **Needles SHOULD NOT be bent, sheared, recapped or removed from the syringe** after use. This increases potential exposure to aerosols and other physical hazards.
3. If procedures or circumstances require removal or recapping, the following method should be used:
 - i. Hold the needle with forceps or pliers for removal.
 - ii. Hold the sheath or guard with forceps or pliers for recapping.
 - iii. Always point the needle away from yourself or other people.

PROPER DISPOSAL OF DIFFERENT SHARPS

Needles and Syringes - are considered regulated waste regardless of use. Place in appropriate plastic containers and contact EH&S for disposal. Never throw these items into regular trash or dumpsters. Refer to the EH&S Glassware and Sharps Disposal Matrix for guidance in choosing the proper disposal method.

Non-contaminated Sharps - broken glassware, glass and plastic pipettes, should be placed into labeled, Fisher Scientific "Glass Only" trash boxes after use. When full, containers should be securely capped to prevent expulsion of contents and then may be put into the regular trash for disposal. Avoid using plastic sharps disposal containers for non-contaminated materials.

Glass Box Usage - all large size Fisher "Glass Only" disposal boxes (27" H floor model) should generally be filled only 3/4 full. The weight of the glass sometimes forces sharps through the box causing injury to those handling the boxes. Also, the weight of fully loaded boxes is difficult for the custodians to lift overhead, which they must do in order to deposit them in the dumpster. Fisher "Glass Only" Containers Are Available At No Charge From The Thimann Stockroom.

Medical / Biohazardous Waste - needles, syringes, scalpels and other biohazardous sharp objects must be placed into labeled plastic biohazardous sharps containers. Full containers should be securely capped to prevent expulsion of contents. Contact EH&S for disposal.

Chemical Waste - needles, syringes, scalpels, razor blades, and other sharps contaminated with non-biohazardous chemicals must be placed in appropriate plastic sharps container, labeled as non-biohazardous and disposed through EH&S.

Radioactive Materials - needles, syringes, and other sharps contaminated with radioactive materials must be disposed of in hardwalled sharps containers labeled for radioactive materials. When full contact EH&S for disposal.