

Safety briefing Toolbox Talk

Ref: SAFE068

Know about sharps

26/07/2021

Issue 1.0

Introduction

Sharps is the term used for anything that can puncture the skin and provide a route of entry into the body for bacteria or disease. Sharps include things like glass or needle sticks from discarded hypodermic needles or syringes. Fibre sharps also fall into this category.

Why it matters: In the case of discarded needles, there is an increased risk of [blood borne diseases](#) such as Hepatitis B and C. And in the case of fibre sharps, the risk of glass splinters entering the body with the potential for serious harm.



Event alert – safety share
Hypodermic needles
All regions

09/06/21
0621-0952

Why is it a hazard:
Reports from across the country that used needles are being found in and around our line plant. Be extra vigilant and these are often left indiscriminately or in some case dropped through the keyholes in our boxes.

Reduce the risk by: Be aware when working /entering boxes, around PCP's and poles and customers premises. Take care when removing or disturbing soil /follage, water and other debris in and around lineplant. Do not attempt to pick them up or remove them without a sharps kit.

worksafe.homesafe.

More info: Health & safety handbook – Blood borne diseases & sharps
Sharps disposal kit - item code 129418

Keeping yourself safe

Thankfully, we rarely see **actual needle stick injuries**; we do see plenty of Near Miss reports. Thank you for reporting them.

It's rare for sharps being deliberately placed to cause harm, but occasionally we get reports of this from other industries. Usually someone has just finished using a needle, or had to rapidly discard it, and often our plant or premises tends to be nearest receptacle.

Risk assessment matters: Wherever people have been, there is the potential for sharps. Doorways and car parks, footway boxes, cabs, by poles, in poles, in silt – all places we've had sharps reported.

Think sharps before you start work and particularly if working UG, and when there is poor visibility.

Note: [Kevlar Cut Gloves](#) are designed to protect your hands **from blade related injuries, not stick injuries**.

Sharps – what to do if you find them (small amounts)

Only use the Sharps removal kit ([i/c 129418](#)) to remove **small quantities** of needles/ syringes where there is no risk of them accidentally puncturing the skin.

- Cover all existing breaks to the skin with a waterproof dressing.
- **Personal protective equipment:** gloves as supplied in the kit (eyeshields 3A and coveralls/overall must be worn).
- Using the tweezers provided, pick up the needle/syringe and place in the sharps container. Do not pick up the needle end.
- When all sharps are in the container, close the container lid. Listen for the final "click" showing it's shut.
- Do not attempt to re-open a closed sharps container.
- Place all used equipment in the 'Biohazard bag' supplied and store this and the sharps container **securely** in the rear of the vehicle.
- Use the Easy Returns process to arrange collection from your nearest FSL for return to Magna Park.



CIN Bin– i/c 007655 know how to use it safely and how to dispose of it.

Safety briefing Toolbox Talk

Ref: **SAFE068**

Know about sharps

26/07/2021 Issue 1.0

Sharp – what to do if you find them continued (large amounts/complex hazard)

If a large quantity of needles are found, or there is a danger when removing small quantities that skin could be punctured, (i.e. the needle is stuck) they must be left in situ and the area guarded off.

For plant - raise an A55 against the Duct Jetting and De-silting service (EEG) who will be able to remove them.

If you are doing this, **make sure people are aware of the hazard**, whether by hazard notes or a physical notice if this is a BT Building.

You can also raise a Property Fault for our premises.

"I opened the front door to leave the exchange and found a hypodermic needle resting on top of the OBASS card reader. I've removed it using the sharps kit from my van, and arranged for safe disposal."

"I also called the assistant facilities manager to arrange for the keypad to be cleaned. I've also mailed a number of fibre & copper managers in the local SOM patch to cascade information to their teams –plus printed up a sign to tell all to take care when using the exchange"

What to do if you are injured by sharps?



- **Stay calm**
- Squeeze the area around the wound to encourage bleeding.
- **Don't suck the wound**
- If possible, wash the wound immediately with soap and water, surgical spirit or a medical wipe
- Contact a first aider for assistance (where available)
- Seek further medical treatment and advice – whether it's A&E or your GP. You may need tests and boosters.
- Your manager can arrange for the sharps to be safely recovered, put in a sharps container and made available for analysis at your place of treatment if you haven't been able to safely remove it.
- Report the incident to the Accident and Incident Reporting Group via **CARM**.

Summary points

- Sharps can be found in most locations we work in – and not always obvious to see
- There is a risk to health if stick injury happens, these are rare
- Use a Sharps Disposal Kit **i/c 129418** to dispose of small quantity of sharps if there is no risk of injury
- Fibre sharps go in a CIN bin **i/c 007655**
- Use the contents of the sharps kit when removing sharps, **including the gloves included**
- Use the easy returns process to return full sharp containers



More info

- [H&S Handbook – Blood borne diseases and sharps](#)
- Easy Returns Process - [Easy returns \(stores\) \(bt.com\)](#)
- RIL Label i/c **006878**
- Engineering Waste Guide <http://snip.bt.com/WASTEDG>

"Gully sucking a box in the town centre this morning and we find a needle under the silt. Be careful out there people. Removed with a sharps kit and no one got jabbed, thankfully"

Safety briefing Toolbox Talk

Ref: SAFE068

Know about sharps

26/07/2021

Issue 1.0

Sharps spotting – your near misses



Remember fibre sharps go in the CIN Bin



Be sharp savvy:

- Not usually deliberately placed
- Can be hard to spot
- Occur in most places we work
- A risk to your health and safety
- Know how to remove them safely