



# Handling Sharps

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Review date: 11/01/13

<b>Document no.</b> SMS-06-SW-0405	<b>Job title/description</b> This document outlines the procedure for safely removing sharp objects such as needles, razor blades and broken glass.		
<b>Review date</b> 11/01/13	<b>References</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AS 4939-2001: Non-reusable personal use containers for the collection and disposal of hypodermic needles and syringes</li> <li>AS 1319-1994: Safety signs for the occupational environment</li> <li>Notification requirements for occupational exposure to human blood-borne pathogens (WorkCover Guide 2003)</li> <li>OHS Regulation 2001 clause 9 Employer to identify hazards</li> <li>OHS Regulation 2001 clause 10 Employer to assess risks</li> <li>OHS Regulation 2001 clause 11 Employer to eliminate or Control Risk</li> <li>Manual Handling Risk Assessment – Handling Sharps 29 July 2007</li> <li>Community Sharps Management Guidelines for NSW Councils, NSW Health</li> </ul>		
<b>Responsible supervisor</b>  Line Manager	<b>PPE and precautions</b>  Puncture-resistant gloves or 2 pairs of surgical gloves worn one on top of the other	<b>Competencies or qualifications</b>  Nil	<b>Licences or permits required</b>  Nil
<b>Tools and equipment required</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sharps container                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>usually yellow, rigid-walled, wide-mouthed, plastic puncture-resistant containers</li> <li>are to have the standard biohazard symbol (below) and be labelled e.g SHARPS ONLY; INFECTIOUS SUBSTANCE; SHARPS BIOHAZARD etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Tongs</li> </ul>			 Biohazard symbol (AS 1319)

<b>General</b>	<p>This document outlines the procedure for safely removing sharp objects such as needles, razor blades or other sharp objects.</p> <p>Staff must be inducted to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>prevent injuries from sharp objects</li> <li>use tongs to remove sharp objects.</li> </ul> <p>Staff must never place their hands anywhere they can't see (such as under seats, restricted access areas, inside cabinets/equipment, etc.) and always use proper rubbish removal equipment.</p>
	 <p><b>Warning</b> Do not use unprotected hands to pick up sharp objects. Do not retrieve sharps from areas with poor visibility. Use a torch when attempting to retrieve sharps from areas with poor visibility</p>

<b>Preventing injuries from sharp objects</b>	<b>Removing needles and syringes</b>	<p>To prevent injuries when removing needles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Isolate the area where the needle is. Either barricade or physically guard the area to prevent others from getting near the needle.</li> <li>Obtain a sharps container, tongs, and gloves.</li> <li>Put the gloves on.</li> <li>Put the container on a solid surface and remove the lid. If you are on a moving train, put your foot on the object, wait for the train to stop, and then pick it up. (If necessary, inform the guard to allow for extra time on the next stop.)</li> <li>DO NOT HANDLE NEEDLES without tongs. Pick up needles with tongs, holding it on the plunger end. Drop the needle sharp-end down into the container.</li> <li>DO NOT TRY AND PUT THE CAP BACK ON THE NEEDLE. Dispose of it.</li> <li>Remove the container to a secure location.</li> <li>Sharps containers are treated as clinical (biohazard waste) and must be removed by a contracted clinical waste removal company.</li> </ol>
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<b>Preventing injuries from sharp objects</b> cont	<b>Removing other sharp objects</b> <p>To prevent injuries when removing sharp objects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Isolate the area where the object is. Either barricade or physically guard the area to prevent others from getting near the object.</li> <li>2. Get a sharps container, tongs, and gloves.</li> <li>3. Put the gloves on.</li> <li>4. Put the container on a solid surface and remove the lid. If you are on a moving train, put your foot on the object, wait for the train to stop, and then pick it up. (If necessary, inform the guard to allow for extra time on the next stop.)</li> <li>5. Do not handle sharp objects with bare hands. Pick up objects with tongs, holding it on the dull end, if possible. Drop the object into the container.</li> <li>6. Remove the container to a secure location.</li> </ol> <p>Sharps containers are treated as clinical (biohazard waste) and must be removed by a contracted clinical waste removal company.</p>
<b>Treating the injured person</b>	<p>Seek first aid immediately.</p> <p><b>Sharp object injury:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• wash away the substance immediately (blood or other body fluid)</li> <li>• If the skin is penetrated wash the area well with soap and running water (alcohol based hand rubs or wipes can be used when soap and water are not available)</li> <li>• Bandage the wound as appropriate.</li> </ul>
<b>Safety of others</b>	<p>Keep safety of others in mind and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• secure the area to ensure sharp objects are contained and do not pose a risk to others</li> <li>• cover with bin (or put foot on it until able to dispose properly)</li> <li>• investigate and identify actions to prevent injuries in the future</li> </ul>
<b>Report the injury</b>	<p>Report the injury by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• notifying the Safety Incident and Injury Hotline</li> <li>• telling the Line Manager.</li> </ul> <p>The Line Manager fills out a <a href="#">Level 5 Investigation Report</a>. Refer to <a href="#">Workplace Incident/Injury Reporting</a> procedure.</p>
<b>Referrals and counselling</b>	<p>Workers and visitors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refer them immediately to a doctor who will assess the risk of transmission, discuss and determine the appropriate tests and any treatment required.</li> <li>• The object must be collected (in accordance with page 1 of this document) and sealed inside a wide mouthed, puncture-proof container (see <i>Tools and equipment required</i> at the top of this page).</li> </ul> <p>Counselling services are available for employees (and are mandatory for any compensation claims).</p> <p>Employees injured by sharp objects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inform the EAP/Trauma hotline</li> <li>• attend a counselling session with their Line Manager and OHS staff.</li> </ul>
<b>Records</b>	<p>Keep records of the incident, including the injury report, referrals, correspondence from medical professionals, and documented evidence of a meeting. Maintain confidentiality at all times. Monitor treatment and follow-up. Refer to <a href="#">Records Management</a> requirement.</p>
<b>Additional controls</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact Health Services for questions regarding health monitoring and confidentiality. Refer to <a href="#">Health Management</a> requirement.</li> <li>• Staff with specific special needs or restrictions in relation to the handling of sharps should not undertake this task.</li> </ul>	