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**First Aid**: 

* Immediately seek first aid/medical treatment.
* Encourage the wound to gently bleed, ideally holding it under running water.
* Wash the wound using running water.
* Do not scrub the wound while you are washing it.
* Do not suck the wound.
* Dry the wound and cover it with a waterproof plaster or dressing.
* Report the incident to your supervisor/line manager and complete an accident report form.
* Contact Occupational Health if there is a risk of contamination.

**Safe disposal:**

* Plan for the safe handling and disposal of needles and sharps before use.
* Dispose of sharps immediately after use into designated rigid sharps containers.
* Always take the sharps disposal box to the point of use.
* Place the sharps disposal box within easy arm’s reach.
* Always discard used sharps in an approved sharps container immediately after use.
* Never reach inside, overfill, or force items in sharps container.



 

**What are sharps?**

Needles, razor/scalpel blades, glass ampoules and any other instrument that can cause injury by cutting, pricking or otherwise penetrating/puncturing the skin.

**What is a sharps injury?**

An injury caused by a sharp penetrating or puncturing the skin. The sharp may be sterile or contaminated with biological, chemical, or radioactive material.



**What are the risks?**

Needle-stick and other sharps injuries are a serious hazard that could result in physical damage to persons. Contact with contaminated needles, scalpels, broken glass, and other sharps may expose individuals to hazardous substances.

**How do sharps injuries occur?**

Common ways in which staff/students sustain needle-stick and sharps injuries include:

* recapping/resheathing needles,
* handling needles that need to be taken apart after use,
* working too quickly, or being distracted.
* bumping into a needle or sharp that another student/staff is holding or has stored inappropriately.
* Cutting with inappropriate tools e.g. using scalpel to remove tubing/cable ties.
* Opening boxes with scissors or open blades.

**What are the Control measures?**

* Eliminate or avoid the use of sharps wherever possible.
* Safer sharps should be used for higher risk activities. Could retractable blades, scissors or box cutters be used instead?
* Never bend, break, or recap needles or blades!

  

* Do not pick up broken glass with hands. Use mechanical means such as a brush and dustpan, tongs, or forceps.
* Never remove a needle from a syringe or blade from a scalpel by hand, if necessary, use forceps instead.

**NEVER:**

* Throw needles in the general waste bin.
* Leave out on open bench, in cupboard, in pockets or in drawers.

## **Safe Use of Sharps Information Sheet**