



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY FACT SHEET: SHARPS




What are sharps?

Sharps are discarded articles that may cause punctures or cuts, including, but not limited to all used and discarded hypodermic needles and syringes, Pasteur pipettes, scalpels, capillary tubes, razor blades and suture needles. Sharps may also be described as any material that may be rigid enough, that when cracked or broken, is able to pierce the skin. Examples would be: broken beaker, metal from a cage or a broken test tube.

How to dispose of sharps?

- Sharps must not be handled directly; use gripping tools such as forceps or a broom and dust pan to collect sharp objects such as broken glass or needles.
- All sharps must be disposed of in puncture-proof/leak-proof containers, which indicate that they are "sharps" biohazardous waste and the container must be labeled with the international biohazard

symbol:  These are red/orange shatterproof containers that resist breaking under normal conditions of use and handling, meet ASTM standard F2132-01, and that are marked prominently with the universal biohazard warning symbol and the word "Biohazard" in a contrasting color.

- Careful management of needles and other sharps are of primary importance. Needles must not be bent, sheared, broken, recapped, removed from disposable syringes, or otherwise manipulated by hand before disposal.
- Used disposable needles and syringes must be carefully placed in conveniently located puncture-resistant containers used for sharps disposal.
- Plastic-ware should be substituted for glassware whenever possible.
- Once the sharps containers are filled to the line marked on the container, they must be sealed and then disposed of by Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) and not placed in the regular trash. Contact EHS at: <http://www.ehs.umass.edu/>
- Care must be taken to follow these procedures to prevent serious injury and comply with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health regulations, 105 CMR 480, Minimum Requirements for the Management of Medical or Biological Waste (State Sanitary Code Chapter VIII)

How to obtain sharps containers?

Personal Medical Care

On campus resident students who regularly use hypodermic needles for medical care and must dispose of these needles can obtain sharps containers and proper procedures for handling sharps from the University Health Services (UHS) Pharmacy. When these containers are full, they must be returned to the UHS Pharmacy for proper disposal and new containers will be issued.

Laboratories

Employees and students who use sharps in their work can obtain sharps containers (free of charge) from the Thermo-Fisher Stockroom in the Lederle Graduate Research Tower. These containers must be disposed of through EHS and *NOT WITH REGULAR TRASH*. Contact EH&S for pick-up at: <http://www.umass.cems.sr.unh.edu/CEMS/RequestRemoval>

When hypodermic needles are found?

When a hypodermic needle (improperly disposed of) is found on the campus, notify EHS or Custodial Services. They will pick it up, dispose of it properly, and investigate the incident.

If you are injured with a hypodermic needle?

- Immediately wash the injured area with soap and water and seek medical attention at the University Health Services - Urgent Care Department
- Report the incident to your supervisor and the Biological Safety Services Manager at EH&S
- File a Notice of Injury Report

Biological Safety Services
117 Draper Hall
40 Campus Center Way
Amherst, MA 01003-9244

Phone: 413-545-7293
Fax: 413-545-2600
E-mail: jladuc@ehs.umass.edu