



Sharps Use and Disposal

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.

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.
- **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.
- **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.