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| **Safety Procedure Title:** | **Disposal of Sharps and Abandoned Needle Pick Up** |
| **Issue Date:** | **July 2002** |
| **Revised Date:** | **October 2015;**  **Charlotte Fetterly, M.Sc(A) Occupational Hygienist**  **Fetterly OHS Services Ltd.** |
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Employees must always watch out for sharp objects that may be encountered and pose a risk of percutaneous injury (e.g. contaminated broken glass at an accident site).

Used disposable syringes and needles, scalpel blades, and other sharp items should be placed in puncture-resistant containers for disposal; these containers should be located as close as practical to the use area. All sharps shall be disposed of in an approved container. Refer to Manage Biomedical Waste guidelines for container specifications.

### Location of Sharps Pick Up Kits

New sharps containers may be obtained from Engineering Operations Stores.

Sharps Pick Up Kits contain sharps containers, gloves and tongs. Sharps containers have been securely installed in the trunks of some City vehicles and are available at various designated locations throughout the City.

**Picking Up Sharps**

* Use something other than gloves (gloves are not puncture-proof) to pick up needles. Keep a small pair of tongs, or a similar tool with your sharps disposal container.
* Have disposable waterproof gloves (such as natural rubber latex, neoprene, nitrile, and vinyl) and a proper sharps container ready.
* Wear gloves
* Place the sharps container next to the needle or other item. Place the sharps container on the ground beside the needle. If possible, place the sharps container on a flat surface. It is recommended to bring the sharps container to the needle instead of bringing the needle to the sharps container.
* For uncapped needles, NEVER TRY TO RECAP.
* Use one hand to hold the tongs. Make sure your **other hand** is well **away** from the **sharp** and the **container.** Do not hold the container in your hand, or you might accidentally puncture yourself.
* Use the tongs to pick up one sharp at a time. Ensure the needle point is pointed away from you when picking up the sharp.
* Do not bend, break, or shear contaminated sharps.
* Do not forcibly push the sharp into the container.
* Do not place hands in sharps disposal containers, and do not open or empty such containers.
* Place the sharp with the point down in the container. When placing the sharp in the container, ensure your other hand is kept clear of the **container** and the **sharp.**
* Keep sharps disposal containers upright.
* Replace sharps containers frequently. It is recommended good practice to fill sharps containers to no more than three-quarters of their usable volume or to fill sharps containers to their fill line. When a container is about ¾ full, bring it to the designated sharps disposal area for disposal. Ask your supervisor where your area’s designated sharps disposal area is located.
* Sharps containers shall not be completely filled, as overfilling may pose a hazard to those persons using and discarding the containers. Lids shall be securely fastened prior to use.
* Obtain a new container.
* Remove and discard the gloves using Single Use Disposable Glove Removal guidelines. Wash your hands according with soap and water. Refer to the Wash Hand guideline for further hand washing guidelines.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DISPOSING OF USED HYPODERMIC NEEDLES

* Use sharps pick up kits, or avoid possibly contaminated materials to prevent occupational exposures.
* Look before reaching. Don’t use your hands to feel or reach into any area or container if you can’t see the contents or if you don’t know what’s there. Use a long-handled stick or other object – not your hands – to explore hidden spots. A flashlight could be used to move objects and to shed light on hard-to-see objects.
* Empty the contents of purses, packs, and other containers by turning them upside down over a table or other flat surface.

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### Disposal of Sharps Containers

When a container is about ¾ full, deliver the sharps containers to the front reception at the Fraser Health, New Westminster Public Health Unit for disposal.

Sharps containers shall not be completely filled, as overfilling may pose a hazard to those persons using and discarding the containers. Lids shall be securely fastened.

The Fraser Health, New Westminster Public Health Unit is located at:  
610 Sixth Street, New Westminster (Second Floor in Royal City Center Mall)

Phone: 604.777.6740

Their hours of operation are Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm, but closed for lunch from 12:00pm to 1:00pm.

Used sharps are considered a “biomedical waste” and must be disposed of in accordance with federal, provincial and local regulations. Do not discard sharps containers into the regular garbage.

**PICKING UP CONDOMS**

If you find a used condom, do not use your bare hands to pick it up. Use waterproof gloves, tongs, or something else to pick it up and throw it in the garbage.