

# Sharps Management

## Purpose

- To minimise the risks associated with sharps management so decreasing the risk of ‘sharps’ injuries.
- To document a standardised practice for sharps management.

## Scope

All staff working with sharps.

## Definitions

Sharps – the classification of sharps for this document includes needles, stitch cutters, used iris scissors, razor blades, and blood glucose lancets.

## Responsibilities

### a. Clinical Managers

- i. To ensure appropriate type and sized sharps containers are available for; all clients having administered sub-cut or IM injections, all clients receiving IV medications or infusions and all nurses undertaking clinical cares.
- ii. To ensure a suitably credentialed company is engaged to manage the provision of sharps containers that meet the appropriate New Zealand standard.
- iii. To ensure a suitably credentialed company is engaged to manage the collection of and destruction of the used sharps containers meeting the appropriate New Zealand standard.

### b. Clinical Nurse/Team Leaders

- i. To ensure all nurses receive education on managing safe sharps disposal.
- ii. Ensure appropriately sized containers are; sent to all clients having SC or IM injections, are restocked into IV bags as required.
- iii. Should a sharps injury occur; to manage the incident as per the documented Blood or Body Fluid Exposure Management Procedure.

### c. Community Nurses

- i. To take all precautions to prevent injuries by undertaking safe sharps management.
- ii. To manage the safe containment and return to the TCHS/ACH regional office for disposal once full, disposal place will vary from region to region check with CNTL/RM.

### d. Support Workers

- i. To take all precautions to prevent injuries by undertaking safe sharps management.

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## Procedure

All healthcare workers should take precautions to prevent injuries caused by sharp instruments or devices; during procedures; when cleaning used instruments; during disposal of used needles; and when handling sharp instruments after procedures.

Work practices should minimise handling of sharps and precautions must be taken, e.g.:

- When disposing of used needles – needles should never be recapped; needles should never be bent or broken.
- Used needles and syringes should be disposed of as a single unit.
- Sharps should not be passed from one person to another.
- The user of the sharps is fully responsible for the sharps disposal.
- Sharps should be immediately disposed of after use. All sharps (other than instruments) must be disposed of into a puncture resistant, leak-proof, yellow sharps container.
- A sharps container must be available in all situations where sharps may be in use.
- Sharps containers must comply with the appropriate NZ Standard. Any issues with sharps containers should be reported to line managers.
- Use care when disposing of sharp objects. Items for disposal into a sharps container should never be forced or pushed into the container. Sharp used medical instruments should be wrapped securely and disposed of into the client’s general waste receptacle.
- Sharps containers must be placed do they are not easily accessible to children or visitors.
- Sharps containers must be closed securely when ¾ full to prevent over filling and the risk of injury
- Lids should be taped down to ensure security.
- Nurses who are located close to head office should return the units directly and obtain a replacement.
- Where staff are located away from the office area the containers should be taped closed, and then securely packaged in a box for return by courier. The container should be packed with [news] paper packed around it in the box for added protection. The box should be closed securely and labelled appropriately. Make arrangements with the office for the box to be couriered to the office and to receive a replacement bin.
- Should a sharps injury occur all staff should be aware of the necessary First Aid management necessary and should immediately report the incident no matter how trivial.
- Sharps containers should be disposed of as per local guidelines by a suitably credentialed company. They should be stored used for a minimal period of time.
- Containers should always be removed and returned from a client’s home following completion of treatment.

## Associated Documents

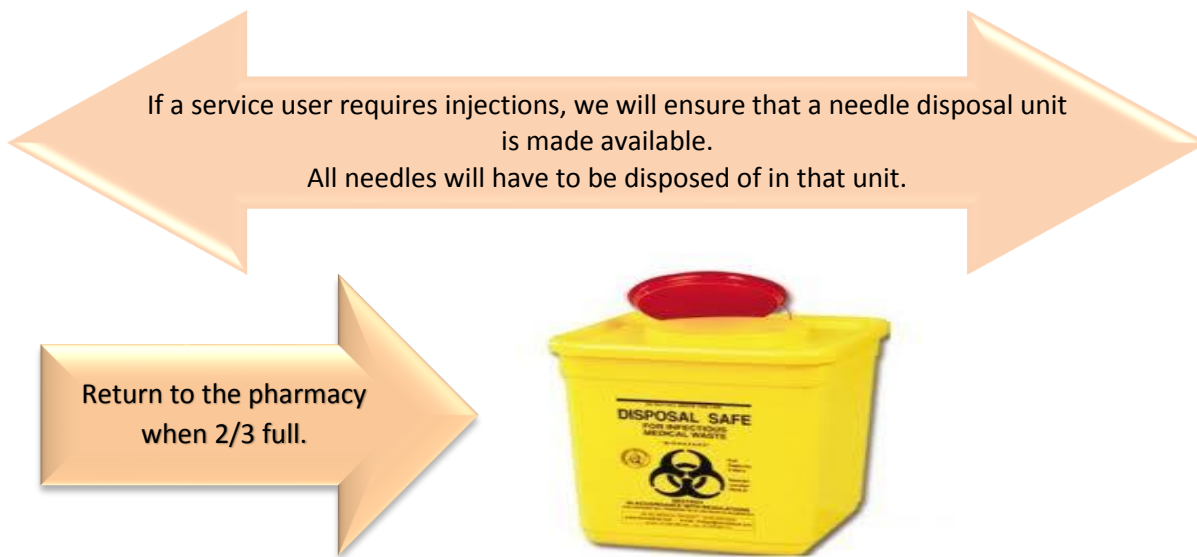
Blood or Body Fluid Exposure Management

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**References**

Bug Control – Infection Control Advisory Service march 2014; Bug Control (Aust) Pty Ltd., Bug Control NZ Ltd. Australia/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 4261 *Reusable Containers for the Collection of Sharp Items in Human and Animal Medical Applications.*  
 Management of Healthcare Waste NZS 4304:2002  
 Health & Disability Sector Standards NZS 8134:2001 (Standard 5.7)

**Sharps Management**



**Single Use Items**



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## Needle stick injuries

All [needle stick injuries](#) have to be treated as potentially infectious.

### Prevention

- ✓ Support staff do not administer injections prescribed for clients mental health conditions.

### First Aid

- ✓ encourage bleeding
- ✓ squeeze the injury
- ✓ do not suck
- ✓ do not scrub
- ✓ wash skin thoroughly with soap and water
- ✓ apply antiseptic/iodine
- ✓ cover injury with waterproof dressing
- ✓ seek medical advice without delay

### Subsequent Actions

- ✓ Implement workplace accident reporting processes.
- ✓ Assess risk of transmission.
- ✓ Discuss the possibility of blood tests for the person having the injury and the person who had been contaminating the needle for specific blood borne diseases.
- ✓ Ensure the GP is completing an ACC form for the staff member.
- ✓ The affected parties will be receiving support as required.