

# Safetygram

NCI-Frederick

ISM146

Laboratory Personnel

January 2016

## Sharps Safety

**'Sharps' are objects that may easily penetrate the skin- examples include hypodermic needles, razors, glass, and some pipets.**

EHS recommends the following practices to prevent accidents associated with the use and disposal of sharps.

- Selection:
  - Use sharps only when there is no alternative.
  - Use “safe” sharps, such as self-sheathing needles or retractable scalpels.
    - Use blunt needles if the purpose is not injection or aspiration of fluids from animals. [BD™ Blunt Fill](#)
    - Use retractable or ceramic blade utility knives for opening boxes. [Slice™ Ceramic Blade](#)
    - Substitute plastic for glassware when possible.
    - Use blunt surgical scissors and forceps when feasible.
- Use:
  - Use Luer lock (screw on) needles with single unit syringes with hazardous materials or agents.
  - Do not reuse, bend, break, or handle used hypodermic needles.
    - Needles may be recapped ONLY by using the one handed method.
  - Do not place unsecured sharps on surfaces in the workspace.
    - Place hypodermic needles point down in falcon tubes in racks.
    - Insert razors and scalpels point down into Styrofoam blocks.
  - Do not handle razor or microtome blades without cut resistant gloves.
- Disposal:
  - Handle and package sharps in such a manner as to prevent accidental punctures.
    - Use utensils such as tongs, forceps, or a dustpan and broom to pick up broken glass, needles or other sharps that have fallen to the floor.
  - Discard used sharps immediately into EHS approved, puncture resistant sharps containers for disposal.
    - Place the sharps container in the work space within arm's reach.

- The NCI-Frederick warehouse stocks sharps disposal containers:
  - (9.5qt stock #66401504) (For all sharps)
  - (5 gallon #66401505) (For all sharps)
  - (11 gallon #66401506) (For glass and pipets- NO needles or razors)
- Do not reach your hands into the sharps container.
- Laboratory personnel must seal sharps containers when 75% full and place them in the medical waste cart outside the building. (FME service workers do not handle sharps containers).
- Do not autoclave sharps containers and biohazard boxes.
- Place sharps contaminated with radiological materials in labeled containers and disposed of as radioactive waste. Decontamination of biohazards mixed with radioactive isotopes may require assistance from Biosafety.

If you have any questions about proper sharps handling and disposal, please call EHS at x1451.