

Toolbox Talk / Note – Management of Sharps Injuries

Local Managers should communicate these key safety messages to their staff at handovers, staff meetings, huddles etc. They are developed in response to events that have occurred or identified hazards.

What are 'sharps'?

'Sharps' are needles, blades (such as scalpels) and other medical instruments that are necessary for carrying out healthcare work and could cause an injury by cutting or pricking the skin (Health and Safety Executive, 2016).

Examples of Sharps: (please note this list is not exhaustive)

- Needles
- Cannula
- Scalpels
- Sharps tips of IV sets
- Contaminated slides
- Stitch cutters
- Razors
- Blood stained/contaminated glass
- Needle adapters

What is a sharps injury?

A sharps injury is an incident, which causes a needle, blade (such as scalpel) or other medical instruments to penetrate the skin.

This is sometimes called a percutaneous injury (Health and Safety Executive, 2016). E-learning modules are essential for all staff at risk – these are available on LearnPro.

Who is at risk?

Health care workers and others in health and social care are at risk.

This includes those who directly handle sharps but also includes workers who may inadvertently be put at risk when sharps are not stored or disposed of correctly, for example Facilities Staff, Domestics, Porters and other non clinical contractors

What should you do if you get a sharps injury?

1. Encourage the wound to gently bleed, ideally holding it under running water
2. Wash the wound using running water and plenty of soap
3. Don't scrub the wound whilst you are washing it
4. Don't suck the wound
5. Dry the wound and cover it with a waterproof plaster or dressing
6. Seek urgent medical advice from Occupational Health Service or nearest Emergency Department if the incident occurs out of hours, as effective prophylaxis (medicines to help fight infection) are available
7. Report the injury to your line manager or supervisor. All incidents and near misses must be reported on Datix, and then investigated. See the tool box talks on Reporting incidents and Near Misses.

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What do I need to remember?

Management of a Sharps Injury starts with YOU! It is your responsibility to know what to do;



Encourage to bleed



Cover it - with a waterproof dressing



Wash it - with soap, under running water



You need to report it

There is a potential risk of transmission of a Blood Borne Virus (BBV) from a significant occupational exposure and staff must understand the actions they should take when a significant occupational exposure incident takes place.

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Management of Occupational Exposure to Blood-Borne Viruses and supporting guidance are available on the Occupational Health Services page on NHS GGC HR Connect - [Occupational Health](#)

If you require to report a sharps incident or require advice, please contact Occupational Health Services on 0141 201 0595 (between 0800–1800 weekdays). Any incidents that occur out with these times should be reported to your local Accident & Emergency unit. Please ensure that you report your injury to Occupational Health on the next working day

You as an employee have a responsibility to ensure you have undertaken any core learning requirement relating to your specific job or work tasks, for example, undertaking appropriate modules on LearnPro, 'Occupational and non-occupational exposures' and 'Prevention-Management of Occupational Exposure'.

Workplace Safety is everyone's business