

SHARPS AND NEEDLE STICK INJURIES

Section:	Health, Safety and Environment (HS)
Subject:	Communicable Diseases
Legislation:	<i>Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (RSA 2000 cF-25); Health Information Act (RSA 2000 cH-35); Public Health Act (RSA 2000 cP-37).</i>
Effective:	November 29, 2011
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APPROVED:

President and CEO

POLICY

The policy of the Board of Governors is to ensure that necessary precautions are taken at SAIT in the case of a sharps discovery or blood and body fluid exposure, and that associated disposal and reporting requirements are met.

PROCEDURE

DEFINITIONS

Blood and body fluid exposure _____ An incident in which blood or body fluid comes into contact with an individual's skin, mucous membrane or through percutaneous injury.

Needle stick injury A penetrating stab wound from a needle or other sharp object that may result in exposure to blood or body fluids.

Personal protective equipment Gloves, gowns, masks and eye protection or face shields. When used correctly, personal protective equipment provides a barrier between a potentially infectious person or material and others, preventing the transfer of pathogens from one person to another.

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SAIT community

SAIT's governors, employees, students, contractors, consultants, agents, and volunteers.

Sharps

Objects that could cause a puncture, cut or abrasion injury if not handled in a safe manner, including but not limited to used needles, syringes, razor blades, and broken glass.

GOVERNING PRINCIPLES

1. Sharps can potentially be contaminated with many types of micro-organisms, including blood borne viruses such as HIV, Hepatitis B or Hepatitis C. Further, micro-organisms can potentially be found in contaminants such as blood, feces or body fluids.
2. SAIT recognizes its legal obligation to provide a safe work environment and that the risk of injury from exposure to sharps requires specific identification, risk assessment, management and control.
3. All members of the SAIT community will refer to this procedure in order to prevent injury and ensure they undertake the correct handling and disposal of sharps, and that they report and take appropriate action in the event of blood or body fluid exposure.
4. Schools/departments are responsible for work practices around, and providing the means for, the safe disposal of sharps in controlled work areas or classrooms.

PROCEDURE

A. Discovery of Discarded Sharps

1. A person who discovers discarded sharps shall immediately call Security at 403.284.8000, await Security's arrival and advise others nearby to avoid the hazard. Due to the open nature of the SAIT campus, sharps may be discovered in publicly-accessible areas not generally known to contain sharps.
2. Staff from Security, the janitorial service or a health, safety and environment specialist will transport a disposal container to the area in which the sharp was discovered. Discarded sharps will be placed in the disposal container and taken to a secure area using the handling and disposal precautions outlined in Sections B and C of this procedure.

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3. A person who is exposed to blood or body fluids shall follow Section D of this procedure.

B. Handling of Discarded Sharps

1. All sharps are to be treated as potentially contaminated.
2. Extreme caution is to be used when handling and disposing of sharps so as to avoid blood or body fluid exposure.
3. Only trained and suitably equipped personnel shall handle sharps. Before handling a sharp, personnel must use the following appropriate control measures:
 - a) Disposable waterproof gloves to handle sharps.
 - b) Protective eyewear with side shields where the risk of fluid splashing exists.
4. Equipment required as part of a recovery/clean up kit includes:
 - a) Body fluid clean up kit.
 - b) Dust pan and broom or brush as required (for example, for sweeping up glass).
 - c) Purpose-designed sharps disposal container, clearly labeled for use with sharps.
 - d) Tongs for picking up needles/syringes.
5. Sharps are not to be transported to a container. The sharps container is to be taken to the area requiring the disposal or clean up.
6. Other handling precautions to be observed include:
 - a) Making no attempt to bend or recap contaminated needles.
 - b) Carefully placing sharps into the sharps container.
 - c) Washing hands with soap and water after sharps have been safely placed in the sharps container and transported to the storage area.

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C. Disposal of Sharps

1. Sharps cannot be disposed of within the regular waste stream, as this is illegal.
2. When a sharps container is three-quarters full, it is to be transported to the Health Clinic, located in the northeast corner of the Senator Burns building, room NR41 (call 403.284.8666).
3. Health Clinic staff will:
 - a) Arrange for appropriate disposal.
 - b) Ensure proper sealing, tagging and record management of sharps for disposal.
 - c) Provide a replacement empty sharps container to the janitorial service and to Security.
4. Schools/departments are responsible for specific work area (i.e. laboratories or classrooms) requirements for sharps containers.

D. Blood or Body Fluid Exposure

1. In the event of a blood or body fluid exposure, carry out immediate first aid as follows.
 - a) Splashes/Mucous Membrane Exposure
 - i) Flush exposed mucous membranes (eyes/nose and mouth) with water or normal saline.
 - b) Sharps and Needle Stick Injuries
 - i) Wash the injured area with soap and water.
 - ii) Allow the injury or wound to bleed freely and then cover to prevent further exposures.
 - iii) DO NOT attempt to squeeze the wound, as this may increase the risk of exposure.
 - iv) Avoid the use of alcohol, hydrogen peroxide, bleach or other chemical cleansers such as antiseptics.

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2. The injured person shall obtain assistance from the work area's certified first aid provider if available and apply a band aid from the first aid kit.
3. The injured person shall notify the immediate supervisor of the injury.
4. The supervisor shall arrange for transportation of the injured person to receive immediate medical attention. **Sharps/needle stick injuries require professional medical attention within two hours.**
5. Upon discovery of a sharp, Security or the janitorial service must ensure the sharp is retained for identification by Safety and Community Services for proper disposal.
6. The injured person's supervisor shall promptly complete a SAIT Incident Report form with the injured person's assistance, and shall promptly submit that form.
7. The supervisor shall contact Safety and Community Services at 403.284.7072 or at hsw.incidents@sait.ca for prompt investigation.

POLICY/PROCEDURE REFERENCE

HS.3.3 Sharps and Needle Stick Injuries policy

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PROCEEDEDURE