

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
Revision:	September 1, 2016 (reformatted)

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 needle stick injury and that associated reporting and disposal requirements are met.

PROCEDURE

DEFINITIONS

- Discovery** Due to the open nature of the SAIT campus, it is possible that sharps could be discovered in publicly-accessible areas not generally known to contain sharps.
- Needle stick injury** A penetrating stab wound from a needle or other sharp object that may result in exposure to blood or other bodily 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.
- SAIT community** SAIT’s governors, employees, students, contractors, consultants, agents, and volunteers.

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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 and Hepatitis B or C. Further, micro-organisms can potentially be found in contaminants such as blood, feces or other bodily 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 management and control.
3. All members of the SAIT community will refer to this procedure, with the intent of preventing injury and ensuring that they undertake the correct handling and disposal of sharps, and that they report and take appropriate action in the event of a resulting needle stick injury.
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.
3. A person who receives a needle stick injury shall follow the procedure outlined in Section D of this procedure.

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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 any needle stick injuries.
3. Only trained and suitably equipped personnel shall handle sharps.
4. Before handling any sharps, appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) is to be worn, including:
 - a) Disposable waterproof gloves to handle tongs; and
 - b) Protective eyewear with side shields where the risk of fluid splashing exists.
5. 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; and
 - d) Tongs for picking up needles/syringes.
6. 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.
7. Other handling precautions to be observed include:
 - a) No attempt is to be made to bend or recap contaminated needles;
 - b) Sharps are to be placed carefully into the sharps container; and
 - c) After sharps have been safely placed in the sharps container and transported to the storage area, hands must be washed with soap and water.

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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 SAIT 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. Needle Stick Injuries

1. In the event of a needle stick injury, immediate first aid is to squeeze the puncture site to make it bleed and to then wash the area with soap and water.
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. Upon discovery of a sharp, Security or the janitorial service must ensure the sharp is retained for identification by Health, Safety and Environment.
4. The injured person shall notify the immediate supervisor of the injury.
5. The injured person's supervisor shall promptly submit a SAIT Incident Report form which is to be completed with the injured person's assistance.
6. The supervisor shall arrange for transportation of the injured person to receive immediate medical attention. **Needle stick injuries require professional medical attention within two hours.**

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7. The supervisor shall contact Health, Safety and Environment (403.284.7072) or email Health, Safety and Environment (hsw.incidents@sait.ca) for prompt investigation.

POLICY/PROCEDURE REFERENCE

HS.3.3 Sharps and Needle Stick Injuries policy

PROCEDURE

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