OECP - 101.20
DISPOSAL OF SHARPS

Engineering and Work Practice Controls shall be used to eliminate or minimize employee exposure. All needles and sharps should be considered potentially infectious and handled with care.

*Contaminated sharps* means any contaminated object that can penetrate the skin including, but not limited to, needles, scalpels, broken glass, broken capillary tubes, pasteur pipettes, and exposed dental wires.

**Disposal of Sharps**

A. Sharps shall be placed in containers that are designed for such purpose (i.e., puncture-resistant, labeled or color coded, leakproof on sides and bottom, closable) immediately or as soon as possible after use. Sharps containers are available from CEHS free of charge.

B. To prevent needlestick injuries, needles should not be recapped, purposely bent, broken, removed from disposable syringes, or manipulated by hand. Shearing or breaking of needles is prohibited.

C. If recapping of used needles must be done and no alternative is feasible or such action is required by a specific medical procedure, a single-handed method must be used, i.e., a resheathing device or the "scoop technique." The need to use this technique must be clearly documented (see OECP - 101.20 Disposal of Sharps).

**Availability/Disposal of Sharps Disposal Containers**

All disposable needles and syringes should be placed into puncture-resistant containers designed and labeled specifically for this purpose in accordance with OECP - 108.00 "Communication of Hazards to Employees." These containers must be located as close as possible to the area where the sharps are used.

A. Containers for sharps shall be:
   1. Easily accessible to personnel and located as close as feasible to the immediate area where sharps are used or can be reasonably anticipated to be found (e.g., exam rooms, nursing stations, treatment rooms, or laboratories).

   2. These containers must be maintained upright throughout use.

   3. Containers must be routinely replaced and not be allowed to
overfill. Containers must be replaced when they are 3/4 full.

B. Disposal of sharps containers shall be carried out by:

1. Closure immediately prior to removal or replacement to prevent spillage or protrusion of contents.

2. Placed in a secondary container if leakage is possible or if the outside of the container is contaminated by blood or body fluids.

The second container shall be:
   a. closable;
   b. constructed to contain all contents and prevent leakage during handling, storage, transport, or shipping; and
   c. labeled with a biohazard label.

C. If reusable containers are used, they shall not be opened, emptied, or cleaned manually or in any other manner which would expose employees to the risk of percutaneous injury.

D. Contaminated reusable sharps shall be stored and processed in such a manner that does not require employees to reach by hand into the container.

H. Sharps containers should be attached to a wall or other structure, where feasible, rather than sitting on a counter.

F. All sharps disposal containers shall be labeled with biohazard symbol or color coded (orange or orange-red).

G. Sharps disposal will be done by the Center for Environmental Health and Safety (CEHS). Contact CEHS at 453-7180 or go to the following website for additional information: http://www.cehs.siu.edu/biological.