

Disposal of Sharps

OVERVIEW

To prevent injuries to refuse collection and recycling personnel, those who use sharps are to follow the disposal precautions indicated below.

Definition

Sharps include, but are not limited to, hypodermic needles, syringes with needles attached, scalpel blades, and lancets that have been removed from the original sterile packaging. Dispose of broken plastic, glass pipettes, and glass capillary tubes separately.

Questions

Questions on disposal methods should be directed to the Office of Research Assurances; telephone 509-335-9553.

Chemicals

Sharps that contact chemicals only (i.e., not biological or infectious agents or radioactive material) may require management as chemical waste. Contact the campus environmental health and safety (EH&S) office for assistance. See also 5.66 and 5.68.

Radioactive Materials

These procedures apply only to nonradioactive material. For disposal procedures of sharps exposed to radioactive material, contact the Radiation Safety Office at 509-335-8916. See also 9.70.

PREPARATION

Place all used sharps (i.e., hypodermic needles, syringes with needles attached, scalpel blades, and lancets removed from original sterile packaging) into an approved sharps container.

Ordering Container

Sharps containers may be purchased from Central Stores. These containers are described in the Central Stores Catalog as "Collector, Biohazard (Sharps)." The available sizes and catalog numbers are as follows:

| | |
|----------|--------|
| 5 quart | #51244 |
| 8 quart | #51245 |
| 5 gallon | #50053 |

Fill Container

Fill the disposal sharps container up to the butterfly closure base (approximately 3/4 full).

Do not overfill the container thus preventing the butterfly closure vanes from automatically closing.

Do not recap needles on syringes after use.

Do not separate needles from syringes prior to disposal.

Disposal of Sharps

Fill Container (cont.)

Needle cutting prior to discarding is not permitted. The action of cutting the needle can cause aerosol contamination of personnel as well as the surrounding surface with residual infectious, toxic, or carcinogenic materials.

Seal Container

Seal the top of the container and place a plastic bag around the entire sharps container. Place the bagged sharps container into a cardboard biohazard box. (See 4.24 for box ordering information.) Seal the cardboard biohazard box with tape.

Label Box

Include the following information on the box label:

- Responsible researcher's name
- Building and room number
- Contact phone number
- Date

Replace Container

Obtain replacement container(s) from Central Stores. Ensure that a replacement sharps container is available in the laboratory at all times.

STORAGE PRIOR TO PICKUP

Take the taped and labeled biohazard boxes to the biohazard waste collection area for the building. NOTE: If the building does not have a biohazard waste collection area, contact the campus facilities services or waste management department to arrange pickup. (WSU Pullman units contact Waste Management; telephone 509-335-4530 or 509-335-9075.)

COLLECTION

WSU Pullman

Facilities Services, Operations Waste Management personnel regularly collect taped and labeled biohazard boxes from the designated pickup points. Contact Facilities Services, Operations if special or additional box pickup is required; telephone 509-335-9075 or 509-335-4530.

Collection of materials is not scheduled for weekends or University holidays.

Non-Pullman Locations

Contact the campus facilities services department regarding collection of biohazard boxes. EXCEPTION: WSU Tri-Cities and WSU Vancouver units contact the campus EH&S office for information regarding biohazard disposal containers, labeling, storage, disposal, and recordkeeping.

The campus facilities services department (or campus EH&S, as applicable) must make arrangements for the incineration of biohazard boxes containing sharps. State regulations do not allow autoclave deactivation or landfill disposal of sharps.