

PROPER HANDLING PROCEDURES FOR SHARPS

What are sharps?

Sharps include needles, syringes, broken glass, glass slides, razors, scalpels, Pasteur pipettes, or any object with a sharp edge.

What are the dangers of using needles and syringes?

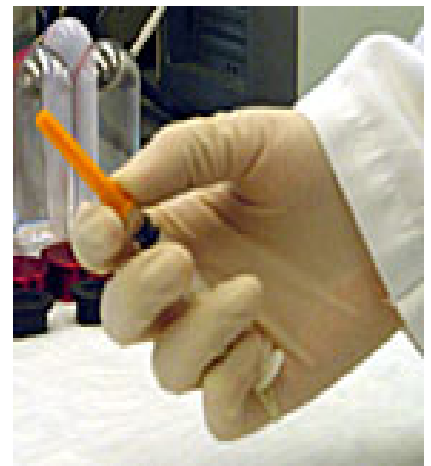
The potential for autoinoculation and the generation of aerosols is very real. Aerosols can be produced by several means including the following:

- Forcing material through a needle,
- Withdrawing a needle from a vial sealed under pressure
- Cutting or shearing a needle.

In order to prevent autoinoculation, needles should never be bent or otherwise sheared.

Re-sheathing needles

Re-sheathing needles is strongly discouraged. However, if re-sheathing is necessary, the one-handed technique must be followed:



What should be done with sharps immediately after use?

Sharps must be segregated by the type of contamination present so that the sharps containers will be disposed of in the correct waste stream. Regardless of the type of contamination present, all sharps must be placed into a rigid puncture-proof container with lid.

Who should be called to pick up the filled segregated sharps containers?

If you work in the hospital or clinic, contact the Environmental Services Department at 353-1283. If you work in a research laboratory contact OEH&S at 476-1300, to pick up sharps containers that are not contaminated with any chemical or radioactive material.

Sharps pick up when contaminated with chemicals or radioactive materials

If sharps are contaminated with chemicals or radioactive materials the containers MUST be disposed of in the following manner:

1. Sharps contaminated with residual amounts of chemicals are disposed of by submitting a [Chemical Waste Removal form](#) to the Office of Environmental Health and Safety (OEH&S) for pick-up.
2. Sharps contaminated with residual amounts of radioactive materials must be disposed of by completing a [Radioactive Waste Disposal Form](#). Contact the Radiation Receiving department of OEH&S at 476-1771 to arrange for disposal.



Where can sharps containers be obtained?

Sharps containers may be purchased from many different scientific supply companies and vendors outside of UCSF.

When do we dispose of containers?

The Medical Waste Act specifies that sharps containers must be discarded when they are 3/4 full. Most sharps containers will be marked with a designated fill line. When the contents of a sharps container reaches the fill line (or is 3/4 full), the container should be closed and taped for disposal.