

Safe use and disposal of sharps and needlesticks

Information on the management of sharps to prevent injury to NHS Property Services (NHSPS) colleagues



Why should we focus on sharps?

Injuries from sharps such as needlesticks are a well known risk in healthcare. Sharps contaminated with an infected person's blood can transmit more than 20 diseases, including Hepatitis B, C and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

Although the risk of contracting a disease is low, these injuries can cause significant anxiety to colleagues who receive them.



How could an NHSPS colleague get injured?

Our NHSPS colleagues play an important role in making sure your clinical environments are well maintained, clean and tidy.

This is often where they come across sharps that have been incorrectly disposed of, either in general waste bags, on the floor next to bins or in toilet areas.

Likewise, there's a risk to a member of your staff should they come across a sharps that is lying around or incorrectly disposed of.

Our duty of care

We have a duty to ensure we do everything we can to protect our NHSPS colleagues' health and safety. This is where we need your help as we are relying on you and your staff to use and dispose of sharps and needlesticks safely and correctly.

Your responsibilities

As a clinical healthcare provider, you should already be aware of your duties under the Health and Safety (Sharps Instruments in Healthcare) Regulations 2013, particularly to ensure the safe disposal of sharps.

Please:

- Provide clearly marked and secure sharps disposal containers placed close to the areas where medical sharps are being used.
- Consider providing secure disposal containers in non-clinical areas such as toilets and external areas in case of any improper use of sharps and needlesticks.

What happens If an NHSPS colleague gets injured?

If one of our NHSPS colleagues is injured by an incorrectly disposed sharp or finds regular evidence of incorrectly disposed sharps, we will formally ask you to investigate the circumstances.

We will ask you to provide a response within 10 working days of the date of the request to confirm what actions you intend to take to prevent a recurrence.

Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013

It is important to note, certain sharps injuries are reportable to the Health and Safety Executive under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 ("RIDDOR").

If this is required by NHSPS due to a colleague injury, full details of the incident will be disclosed to the Enforcing Authority.

Want more information?

If you'd like to discuss the safe disposals of sharps, please get in touch with your local NHSPS contact or our Customer Service Centre.



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