

Occupational Health - Fact Sheet

SHARPS

- Sharps represent a significant hazard in the laboratory.
- Proper usage and disposal is key to safety when using sharps.
- Never recap needles after use.
- If an injury occurs, perform first aid and report the incident to your supervisor.

Sharps are ubiquitous in laboratory work, and include needles, broken glass, syringes, pipette, and scalpel blades. Puncture-resistant and leakproof containers for sharps must be available at all critical locations throughout the facilities. Improper disposal of sharps with regular trash may expose laboratory workers and custodial staff to wounds, and potentially, to infectious agents and hazardous chemicals. State and municipal regulations are specific in the requirements for proper disposal of "sharps." Kansas State University policies and procedures on the proper disposal of "sharps" may be found at the web site of the Department of Environmental Health & Safety: <https://www.k-state.edu/safety/docs/Biohazardous-Medical-Waste-Management-FINAL.PDF>.

Treatment of a sharps injury will vary with degree of the wound and the likelihood that exposure to a chemical or biological agent occurred. If you injure yourself with a sharps, perform first aid immediately and report the incident to your supervisor and seek medical attention if needed. Be sure to report the source of your injury and any potential agent exposures that you may have sustained.