



Title:	Sharps Safety	Index Number:	FMS-SFT-002 <small>(Func. - Categ. - Sr.No.)</small>
Function:	Facility Management and Safety	Category:	Safety
Scope of application:	All Departments/Units/ Sections	Original Date:	Next Review Date: 06.08.2008 06.08.2010

1. Policy

1.1. This policy addresses the proper procedures for handling and disposing of sharps.

2. Purpose

2.1. To provide a framework for sharps handling, disposal, exposure and injury reporting.

2.2. To maintain a safe working environment for AUBMC personnel by raising awareness on the safe use of sharps.

3. Definitions

3.1. **Sharps:** are instruments or objects that can puncture or cut the skin such as needles, small glass objects, scalpel blades, IV catheters, lancets, razor blades or any sharp like object.

3.2. **Source Patient:** is the patient on whom a sharp instrument was used.

3.3. **Passive Safety Feature:** is an integrated safety feature that does not require the user to activate it, and remains effective before, during, and after use.

4. Procedures

4.1. Proper Handling of Sharps

4.1.1. For any anticipated contact with body substances or contaminated equipment, sharps shall be handled using appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE; i.e. gloves, gowns, masks, and eye protection) as per the standard precautions policy **(PCI-008)**.

4.1.2. Needles shall not be recapped, clipped, or bent before disposal.

4.1.3. Needle caps shall not be placed in the mouth for uncapping.

4.1.4. Sharps, whether clean or contaminated, shall not be carried in pockets.

4.1.5. Sharps shall not be left unattended. They shall not be left on surfaces in the patient's room such as patient's bed, stretcher, bedside table, attached to the IV administration set, or hung over the IV pole.

4.1.6. Instruments or scalpel blade removers shall be used to remove blades.

4.1.7. Patients shall be alerted before pricking them with a sharp instrument to prevent unexpected movement. Assistance shall be sought when using sharps in caring for uncooperative patients.



- 4.1.8. When encountering resistance in withdrawing sharps from patients, excessive pulling force shall be avoided.
- 4.1.9. Sharps containers shall be placed at the point of use of sharps, on medication and treatment carriages.
- 4.1.10. Sharps used at a distance from a sharps container shall be transported safely to the disposal area by using a puncture-resistant basin.
- 4.1.11. A neutral zone shall be established during invasive procedures to ensure that the same sharp is not handled by more than one person at the same time.
- 4.1.12. Sharps shall not be transported from one hand to another.
- 4.1.13. Safety devices with a passive safety feature, needleless intravenous devices or safer needle systems shall be used whenever available.
- 4.1.14. If possible, the use of sharps shall be replaced with other instruments such as forceps or alternative procedures.
- 4.1.15. Rushing shall be avoided when handling sharps.

4.2. Disposal of Sharps

- 4.2.1. It is the responsibility of the person using the sharp to discard it safely.
- 4.2.2. Sharps shall be disposed of immediately at the point of use in a sharps container without any manipulation and shall not be discarded into regular trash.
- 4.2.3. Sharps shall not be forced into a sharps container.
- 4.2.4. Discarded sharps shall not be retrieved from a sharps container.
- 4.2.5. Appropriate size sharps containers shall be selected for the clinical activity according to the size of the sharps used.
- 4.2.6. Temporary closure device of the sharps container shall be used to prevent accidental spillage.
- 4.2.7. Sharps containers shall not be overfilled. They shall be replaced regularly, when they are $\frac{3}{4}$ full, or when sharps reach the fill line.
- 4.2.8. Sharps containers shall be within arm's reach according to standard ergonomic measurements (**Appendix 6.1**). The top of a sharps container shall always be viewed to avoid puncture injury from a sharp sticking out of the opening.
- 4.2.9. Disposable syringes and needles shall be discarded whenever possible as a single unit into sharps containers.
- 4.2.10. Disposal of sharps depends on the type of sharps containers used in the area (**Appendix 6.2**).

4.3. Reporting Exposures

- 4.3.1. In the event of an accidental sharps injury, the healthcare personnel shall:
 - a. Immediately wash the affected area with soap and water.
 - b. Gently encourage free bleeding of the wound but do not suck or squeeze the injured site.
 - c. Seek medical help if excessive bleeding occurs or the wound requires suturing.



- 4.3.2. All sharps injuries shall be reported to the immediate supervisor and shall be documented using the Incident/Occurrence Report Form as per the Non-Patient Incident Reporting Policy (**FMS-SFT-003**) and the Management of Accidental Blood or Body Fluid Exposure policy (**PCI-011**).

5. Signatures

Prepared by	Name	Signature	Date
Staff Sharp Injuries Task Force	Ms. Aline Bassil		7/8/08
Reviewed and Concurred by	Name	Signature	Date
Accreditation Compliance Officer	Ms. Lisa Sekilian		26/8/08
Director, Environmental Health Safety & Risk Management	Mr. Azmi Imad		28/8/2008
Approved by	Name	Signature	Date
Medical Center Director	Mr. Munthir Kuzayli		29/09/08
Chief of Staff, Accreditation Survey Coordinator	Saleem Kiblawi, MD, FCCP		Sept 4 2008
Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs, Chief Medical Officer	Ziyad Ghazzal, MD		Oct 17 2008
VP for Medical Affairs and The Raja N. Khuri, Dean, FM&MC	Nadim Cortas, MD		Oct 27 2008

6. Appendices

- 6.1. Standard Ergonomics Measurements
- 6.2. Methods of Using Sharps Containers

7. Circulation List

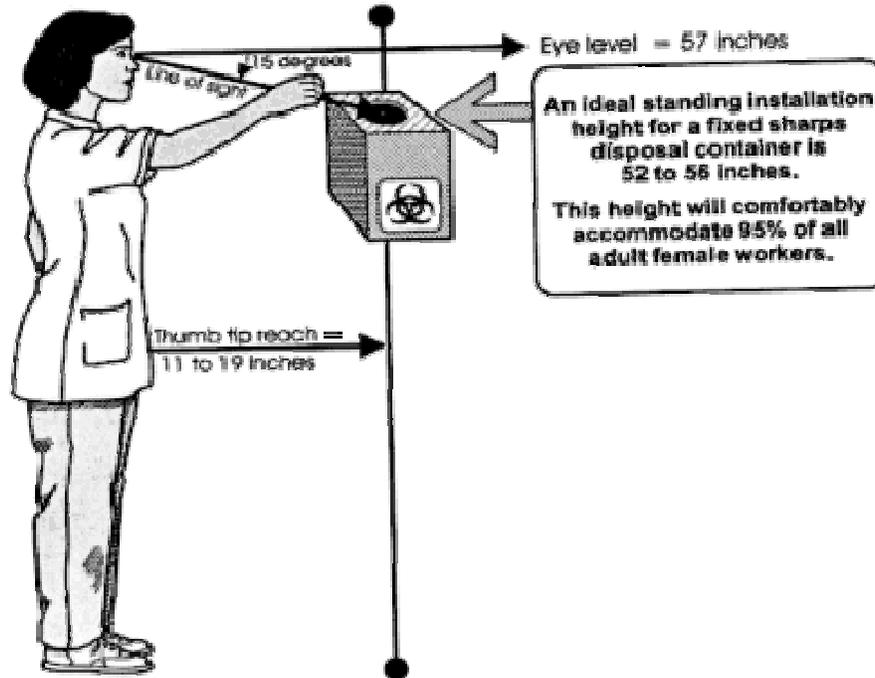
- 7.1. AUBMC Facility Management and Safety Manual (online)

8. References

- 8.1. Joint Commission International Accreditation, Standard for Hospitals, 3rd Edition, effective January 2008, Prevention and Control of Infection
- 8.2. Non-patient Incident Reporting Policy
- 8.3. <https://his.aub.edu.lb/accrm/policies/ICP/PCI008Standard.prec.pdf>
- 8.4. <https://his.aub.edu.lb/accrm/policies/ICP/PCI011mgmt.exp.pdf>
- 8.5. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Healthcare Epidemiology Policies and Procedures
- 8.6. Yale Risk Management handbook – New Haven Hospital & Yale University School of Medicine.



STANDARD ERGONOMICS MEASUREMENTS



Ergonomic Installation Height for a Wall-Mounted Work Station



METHODS OF USING SHARPS CONTAINERS

If the sharps container has a self closing cradle, dispose of sharps horizontally (Once the over fill line is reached, inform the clerk to replace).



If the sharps container has an anti-kickback design, place sharp horizontally in container opening, then lift lid until sharp drops (If sharp is stuck, report the situation to the supervisor).



If the sharps container has a large slotted hole, dispose of sharps vertically; or



If the sharps container has an unwinder (needle remover) mechanism, remove needles from syringes only when indicated and if the needle is disposable but the syringe is not. Separate the needle from the syringe as follows:

- Insert the needle into the unwinder hole and slide hub towards narrow section until it wedges in.
- Turn the holder counterclockwise to unscrew the needle.
- Once the needle is free, move it towards the wider area and let it drop into the container. The user will be holding the syringe/needle holder and the needle will drop into the sharps container by itself.
- Dispose of the syringe as biohazardous waste.
- The large slotted hole may be used for disposing of lancets and butterflies.

