



**SAFE SHARPS HANDLING STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP)**

**I. Purpose**

- a. The TTU Safe Sharps Handling SOP focuses on procedures for proper handling, management and disposal of sharps.

**II. Scope**

- a. Demonstrate prevention methods for sharp injuries and to determine the proper usage and disposal of all sharps.

**III. Roles and Responsibilities**

- a. Personnel
  - i. Be aware of the risks associated with using sharps.
  - ii. Always look for safer alternatives to using sharps.
- b. Principle Investigator/Supervisor
  - i. Responsible for the safety and training of their laboratory personnel.

**IV. Risk Assessment**

- a. Inspect area for adequate lighting and emergency aids.
- b. Maintain visual contact with the procedure site and location of the sharp.
- c. Be aware of surroundings and others around you at all times while working with sharps.
- d. Never pass an uncapped needle to other personnel.
- e. Check all glassware for cracks prior to use.
- f. A sharps container must always be present when working with sharps.

**V. Safety Considerations**

- a. Needles should never be re-sheathed, removed from disposable syringe, or manipulated by hand.
- b. All sharps should be disposed of in the proper container(s).
- c. Always use a secondary container when transporting any sharp from one area to another.
- d. Leur lock syringes should be used.
- e. Never pick up an uncapped needle or broken glass with your hands.
- f. Always use forceps, tongs or dust pan and broom.
- g. Retractable devices should be considered when it is cost effective.

**VI. Procedure**

- a. Engineering controls should be in place wherever sharps are in use.
  - i. Proper disposal containers, self-sheathing needles (where cost effective), and broken glass containers.
- b. Training of proper use/disposal of sharps.
  - i. Introduction of safer alternatives to sharps.

- ii. Use [safer sharps devices](#) when possible.
- iii. All sharp containers must be labeled, color coded. Never fill a sharps container to capacity (two thirds full).
- c. Proper use of sharps in the laboratory.
  - i. Never pass sharps by hand.
  - ii. Always use a secondary container when passing or transporting sharps.
  - iii. Give verbal warning when passing sharps.
  - iv. Absorbent liner should be used beneath work surface.
  - v. Dispose of sharps in sharps container.
  - vi. Never recap a sharp unless you have prior approval from Environmental Health and Safety.
    - 1. If you choose to recap a sharp, complete the **Sharps Recapping Permission** form.
    - 2. Recapping is prohibited prior to final disposal.
- d. Disposal of sharps.
  - i. Biologically contaminated sharps:
    - 1. Biologically contaminated sharps must be disposed of as regulated medical waste. Use appropriate sharps containers that are red or marked with the biohazard symbol.
    - 2. Do not fill more than 2/3 full.
    - 3. These containers are removed using a regulated medical waste contractor. Contact Environmental Health and Safety for disposal information.
  - ii. Chemically contaminated sharps:
    - 1. Chemically contaminated sharps must be placed into a puncture proof container labeled "CHEMICAL CONTAMINATED SHARPS".
    - 2. Do not fill more than 2/3 full.
    - 3. These containers are disposed using a hazardous waste contractor. Contact Environmental Health and Safety for information.
  - iii. Non-hazardous sharps disposal (Broken Glass/Scalpels/Razor Blades):
    - 1. These sharps can be disposed of into a strong cardboard box or other container. The container must be labeled "BROKE GLASS". When the box is full tape it closed.
    - 2. These containers can be disposed into the dumpster.
  - iv. Non-hazardous sharps disposal (needles):
    - 1. These sharps can be disposed of into a plastic container. The container must be labeled "SHARPS". When the container full tape it close the container.
    - 2. These containers can be disposed into the dumpster.

## VII. Procedure for Injury Response

- a. When a sharps injury occurs (not a bloodborne pathogens exposure):
  - 1. A bloodborne pathogen exposure is an exposure to human blood or other human body fluids as defined in **OSHA 29 CFR 1910.1030**.
    - i. Remove gloves or contaminated clothing immediately.
    - ii. Wash the injured area thoroughly with soap and water for 15 minutes at the same time express the wound.

1. If in the eye, immediately wash area with running water. Use an eyewash if available.
- iii. Immediately report incident to supervisor
  1. Any person involved in a sharps incident must report the incident to Environmental Health and Safety within 24 hours. A sharps injury report will be completed by Environmental Health and Safety.
- iv. Seek additional medical care if necessary.
- v. TTU employees must follow Worker's Compensation procedures.
- b. When a sharps injury occurs that involves bloodborne pathogens (**OSHA 29 CFR 1910.1030**):
  - i. Refer to your Bloodborne Pathogen training and the TTU Exposure Control Plan for proper response. Any person involved in a sharps incident must report the incident to Environmental Health and Safety within 24 hours. A sharps injury report will be completed by Environmental Health and Safety.

#### **VIII. References**

OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens Standard 29 CFR 1910.1030