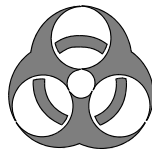


From: Robert Golden, Biological Safety Officer
Date: July 28, 2003
Subject: Sharps and Infectious Waste: Handling and Disposal

- **Sharps** are items that are capable of puncturing, cutting, or abrading the skin (glass and plastic pipettes, broken glass, test tubes, petri dishes, razor blades, needles, syringes, etc.).
- **Infectious waste** is any material that has been used or contaminated with biohazardous agents (petri dishes, surgical wraps, culture tubes, syringes/needles, blood vials, etc.).

Laboratory employees that routinely work with sharps and building services personnel who handle wastes are at risk of being punctured or lacerated during their workday. It is important to properly handle and dispose of this type of waste material in order to prevent injury and potential disease transmission. The following sharps and infectious waste guidelines should be utilized:

1. Do not place any sharps into the regular trash.
2. Needles and razor blades must be disposed of in puncture proof plastic containers.
3. Clean broken glass and plastic sharps should be collected in a cardboard box or other strong, secure disposable container. Do not overload these boxes and keep them a manageable weight (20 lbs. max). When the box is ready to be removed, tape it shut and label it "SHARP OBJECTS/GLASS - DISCARD". Contact your assigned Building Services employee for disposal.
4. **Category 1** infectious waste is contaminated materials and/or sharps exposed to human blood or blood products, or with any biohazardous agent capable of being infectious. Category 1 wastes must be:
 - Properly decontaminated prior to REM removal. Decontaminate by either chemical means (bleach) or by autoclave.
 - Stored in a secure area that restricts access to the general public and is protected from the environment and vermin.
 - Placed in leak proof, rigid, puncture-resistant containers that are tightly sealed to prevent spillage.
 - Labeled with the biohazard symbol.



Category 2 waste items have the general appearance of infectious or medical waste, but are not biohazardous. These are also known as look-alike infectious waste, i.e. non-biohazardous used petri plates, animal blood stained surgical items, etc... Category 2 waste must be:

- Stored in a secure area that restricts access to the general public and is protected from the environment and vermin.
- Placed in leak proof, rigid, puncture-resistant containers that are tightly sealed to prevent spillage.

REM will remove Category 1 and 2 waste upon request. Complete the REM bio-material pick-up and treatment certification form and call 40121. (<http://www.adpc.purdue.edu/PhysFac/rem/eh/biowaste.htm>)

5. Chemically contaminated sharps must be decontaminated with a suitable cleaning agent or removed by REM as a hazardous waste. (<http://www.adpc.purdue.edu/PhysFac/rem/hmm/chemwast.htm>)

Building Service Crew

- Before removing a cardboard sharps box from a laboratory make sure the box is sealed, labeled, and intact.
- Always check the corners for protruding improperly discarded needles.
- Handle the box with care by avoiding the corners and utilize personal protective equipment such as leather gloves.
- Never hold a cardboard sharps box against your body, do not squeeze these containers, and never throw or drop these containers.
- Do not place the cardboard sharps box directly into the dumpster (sharp boxes can burst open as they fall into the truck during the loading process). Make sure the cardboard sharps box is in a location out of the weather and away from walkways.

Grounds Crew

- Cardboard sharps boxes that are wet or visibly damaged should not be handled without the use of tools, i.e., tongs or scoop-shovel.
- Cardboard sharps boxes that are dry and intact should be handled with care and by utilizing personal protective equipment such as leather gloves.
- Never hold a cardboard sharps box against your body, do not squeeze these containers, and never throw these containers into the back of a truck or dumpster.
- Report improperly disposed sharps to REM.
- Report biohazard labeled containers to REM

Exposure procedure

If there is a cut, puncture, or other injury resulting from handling a sharps box:

- Wash the injury sight with soap and water
- Inform your supervisor
- Report to PUSH Urgent care (procedures for BBP)
- Bring the sharp with you and have locations ready
- Contact REM: 41496

For questions regarding biological safety contact REM at rwgolden@purdue.edu or call 41496. For more waste handling information or to request waste pick-up contact REM at 40121.