

MEMORANDUM

From: Robert Golden, Biological Safety Officer
Date: January 4, 2006
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. Do not try to put the protective safety cap back onto used hypodermic needles.
3. Clean broken glass and plastic sharps should be collected in a cardboard box or other strong, secure disposable container. 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 wastes upon request. Complete the REM biomaterial pick-up and treatment certification form and call 40121. (<http://www.purdue.edu/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.purdue.edu/rem/hmm/chemwast.htm>)

Questions regarding biological safety should be directed to the Biosafety officer (rwgolden@purdue.edu or call 41496). For more waste handling information or to request waste pick-up contact REM at 40121.