

# ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

## RESEARCH SAFETY

# BIO SAFETY



## Handling Sharps Safely

Sharps are items that are capable of puncturing, cutting or abrading the skin. Such items include:

- Glass and plastic pipettes
- Broken glass
- Test tubes
- Petri dishes
- Razor blades
- Needles
- Syringes with needles

Injuries from sharps often occur due to improper handling, such as recapping needles or unsafe disposal practices. These incidents can lead to serious consequences, including exposure to bloodborne pathogens. That's why safe management of sharps is essential for maintaining a safe lab environment.

### Who's at Risk?

Lab personnel who routinely use or dispose of sharps should be particularly mindful of the risks. To reduce the chance of injury, staff should always use:

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)



Administrative Operations

Environmental Health and Safety

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- Tongs or forceps to handle sharps when appropriate
- Barriers or guards to reduce contact risk
- Engineering controls, such as sharps containers

### Handling and Disposal Guidelines:

- Use extreme caution when working with needles, syringes or other sharps.
- Do not bend, break, recap or remove needles by hand.
- Immediately dispose of all sharps in an approved, puncture-resistant sharps container.
- Never overfill sharps containers—replace them when they are about three-quarters full.

Taking the time to follow these best practices can prevent injury and protect everyone in the lab. For more details or assistance with proper sharps disposal, contact Environmental Health and Safety.

