

Dealing with needle sticks In the workplace

Needles, razor blades, knife blades etc. have been found discarded in many places (transport upholstery, clothing, discarded furnishings as well as hid in public places) and can pose a serious risk to employees in the workplace. Therefore their disposal should be dealt with in a safe and appropriate manner.

If available then use a sharps-kit along with forceps, litter-picker tongs or other such devices. This will create natural distance between the item and the employee.

If such implements are unavailable or not practical to use, then thought should be given to the level of protection you give to the person undertaking the task.

Needlestick resistant gloves can be easily sourced online and should always be considered if it is felt they would lessen the risk to the employee undertaking the task at hand.

If sharps-kits are not available then other suitable receptacles can be used. E.g. metal tins, hard plastic tubs or empty water / soft drinks bottles with a lid.



Once collected, the container should be sealed and can either be taken to a doctors surgery, or to a pharmacy so that it can be disposed of in their weekly clinical waste run. Any containers used must not be filled over $\frac{3}{4}$'s of its capacity

Always document what was found for future records and your own safety records!

It should also be recorded as a *near miss*.

What to do if injured by a needle

- Never suck a wound.
- Encourage bleeding for a minute or two if possible by pinching the wound with your thumb and forefinger.
- Wash well under **cold** running water (**no soap**).
- If possible retain the needle for examination at A&E.
- Attend A&E and explain thoroughly how the injury occurred.
- **Report** the incident to management at the soonest opportunity for investigation.

**SORT IT, REPORT IT,
DON'T IGNORE IT!!**