

# Safe Work Procedure – Handling and Disposing Sharps

## Purpose

This document describes the safe work procedure for handling and disposing of “sharps” safely.

## Scope

This document applies to all UBC employees (faculty, staff, students, visiting researchers, and volunteers)

## Regulations

- [WorkSafeBC Occupational Health and Safety Regulation](#)
  - Section 30.25: Sharps

## Definitions

**Sharps:** *Needles, scalpel blades, suture material with needles, glass vials, any other sharp objects that may have been in contact with blood and body fluids*

**Administrative Controls:** The modification of work processes or activities to minimize risk

**Engineering Controls:** The modification of the physical work environment to minimize risk

**Hazard:** A potential source of harm to a person that can lead to a risk of injury or occupational disease

**Risk:** The chance of injury or occupational disease

**Risk Assessment:** The process where hazards are identified, their risk evaluated, and controls for the risk are determined to eliminate the hazard or minimize the risk

**Supervisor:** The person directly responsible for overseeing the tasks of the worker

**Worker:** All employees of UBC including faculty, staff, and paid students



## Responsibilities

### Supervisor

- Identify all workers who carry out this task under your supervision
- Conduct a risk assessment to identify the potential hazards associated with the task and their associated risks
- Implement controls using the hierarchy of controls to minimize the risk due to the hazard
- Ensure safe work procedures are documented
- Ensure proper training has been provided to workers PRIOR to commencing work (e.g. safe work procedures, use of equipment or tools, personal protective equipment requirements, identifying and reporting hazards, etc.) and that the training has been documented
- Ensure workers have access to and understand any required documentation such as manuals, Safety Data Sheets (SDS) etc.
- Educate workers on emergency procedures, contacts and numbers. If emergency contact information is not posted at the workplace, provide the worker with a copy to carry with them. The worker must know what to do in case of emergency/injury
- Ongoing consultation with Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee in the review and revision of this procedure to ensure the content is adequate and relevant to current research
- Communicate risks that may arise outside of those that are predetermined

### Workers

- Understand and follow this safe work procedure
- Complete the required training for the task
- Use proper personal protective equipment
- Report any unsafe conditions to their supervisor
- Report all incidents in [CAIRS](#)

## Risk Assessment

Attach the completed risk assessment to this document.

## Training Requirements

- Biosafety Training
- Chemical Safety Training

## Materials/Equipment

- Safety glasses
- Gloves
- Sharps waste container



- Forceps (if applicable)

## Safe Work Procedure

### Before Commencing Work:

1. Ensure you have a sharps container within easy reach.
2. Ensure that no one is between you and the sharps container.
3. Always have hand washing facilities available – sink/soap/hand sanitizer.
4. Wear disposable waterproof gloves (for example, latex or neoprene gloves), and have a proper sharps container ready.

### Commencing Work/Work Procedure:

5. Place all sharps at the upper end of the procedure tray, pointed away from you to avoid an accidental injury.
6. Discard all used syringes (including single-use injector syringes) as a single unit.
7. Using forceps, remove the blade from a non-disposable scalpel handle without breaking the blade.
8. Place used sharps in the sharps container with the sharp end pointed away from you.
9. Do not insert fingers into the opening of the sharps container.

### Post Procedure:

1. When finished, wash hands with soap and water or clean hands with a hand sanitizer.
2. Before leaving the work space, ensure that all sharps are disposed of correctly.
3. Before leaving the work space, ensure that all spills are appropriately cleaned.

### Other Important Information

- Always choose single-use safety engineered syringes if possible.
- Never recap needles.
- Do not separate needles and syringes – discard as a single unit.
- Do not purposefully bend, break or remove a needle from the syringe.
- If needle and syringe are inadvertently separated, use forceps to dispose of needle.
- Never dispose of sharps in the regular garbage.
- Do not use a sharps container that is more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  (three quarters).
- Do not attempt to open a sharps container that has been locked closed.

## Emergency Rescue and Evacuation Procedures

### Emergency Contact Information

- Police (911)

### Mode of Emergency Communication

- Cell phone, landline



### First Aid

- UBC Vancouver Campus First Aid (604.822.4444)

### Emergency Procedures

- On campus
  - Seek first aid
  - Contact supervisor
  - Report incident in CAIRS
- Off Campus
  - Seek first aid
  - Contact supervisor
  - Report incident in CAIRS



### Review and Retention

This SWP is reviewed annually or whenever deemed necessary by the responsible departmental representative.

### Document Approval Signatures

_____ Name of Supervisor	_____ Signature of Supervisor	_____ Date
_____ Name of Department Head	_____ Signature of Department Head	_____ Date