



## NEEDLE HANDLING POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to protect students, employees and the general public from needlestick and/or exposure to chemicals or biohazardous materials via needlestick. You must consistently follow the **SAFE WORK PRACTICES** listed below to reduce the likelihood of chemical or biohazardous materials exposure and/or injury from needles.

### Definitions

**Biohazard** – an infectious agent or material that constitutes a hazard to humans, animals or the environment.

**Sharps container** – A rigid, puncture resistant, leak-proof container having a closable top used to hold discarded needles, razor blades, broken glass, glass pipettes or other sharps.

**Engineered sharps protection** – needle or injection systems designed to protect the user from injury.

### Safe Work Practices

1. **Needles used for withdrawing blood** or any other body fluids, or used for administering medications or other fluids must have “**engineered sharps protection**” which is a physical attribute built into a needle which effectively reduces the risk of an exposure incident by a mechanism such as barrier creation, encapsulation etc. Contact CNSM Safety for vendor information.
2. **Disposable needles contaminated with human blood or blood products may NEVER be removed from their original syringes.** Those contaminated with chemicals or animal blood or blood products should also never be removed from their original syringes unless no other option is available. Throw the ENTIRE needle/syringe assembly (needle attached to the syringe) into the RED plastic sharps container.  
**NEVER REMOVE THE NEEDLE BY UNSCREWING IT WITH YOUR HANDS!!!**
3. **Used disposable needles/sharps shall be discarded immediately after use WITHOUT RECAPPING into an approved SHARPS CONTAINER,** a non-reusable plastic container that is puncture resistant, leak proof on the sides and bottom, properly labeled and closable. These containers are available at no charge from the CNSM Safety Office.
  - Sharps containers labeled BIOHAZARD are used for the disposal of sharps contaminated with human or infected animal body fluids, or for sharps contaminated with biohazardous microorganisms. These may be red or clear plastic.
  - Sharps containers NOT labeled BIOHAZARD are used for the disposal of all other sharps, and for the disposal of unused needles. Never put syringes full of hazardous chemicals in the sharps container; expel the liquid into the appropriate Hazardous Waste container prior to disposal. These are usually clear or beige.

4. **NEEDLES MUST NEVER BE RECAPPED, with one exception:** Needles which have NOT been in contact with animal or human tissue, blood or blood products may be recapped using mechanical means or a one-handed recapping process. The “one-handed recapping process” means that you cannot hold the cap during the recapping process. Uncapped needles must be stored and/or transported in a safe manner e.g. placed in a pan.
5. **NEEDLES MUST NEVER BE BENT OR BROKEN prior to disposal in the approved sharps containers.** These processes present a needlestick hazard and can generate aerosols causing biohazardous or chemically hazardous material to become airborne. Needle cutting devices are prohibited.
6. During use, **sharps containers shall be easily accessible** to personnel and located as close as is feasible to the immediate work area.
7. The sharps containers shall be maintained upright throughout use and not be allowed to overfill. **Never rearrange, compress or “push down” on the contents of any sharps container with your hands!** Contact the CNSM Safety Office at x55623, MIC-207, when the sharps containers are 2/3 full. They will arrange for proper and timely disposal, and will provide a replacement container.
8. To prevent spillage or protrusion of contents, carefully **close the sharps container immediately prior to handling or transporting it.** Place the sharps container in a rigid, leakproof secondary container if leakage of the primary container is possible.
9. **In the event a person is injured by a needle, CNSM Safety must be informed immediately** of the event and of any contaminant possibly present in the needle (chemical or biohazard). The needle or needle/syringe must be disposed of in a red sharps container. Treat the injured party as you would for any other incident: if the person was injured while working as a student, send her/him to the Student Health Center and immediately fill out a departmental Incident Form. If the person is an employee and was injured while working “on the job”, an Incident Form must be filled out immediately and the person urged to go to the designated employee medical care facility. The appropriate supervisor (Henry Wu) or CNSM Safety must be contacted for the necessary forms if the person decides to seek treatment.
10. To protect yourself and to comply with Cal/OSHA regulations, **DO NOT CLEAN UP OR DISPOSE OF HUMAN BLOOD/BLOOD CONTAMINATED ITEMS YOURSELF!** This clean-up must be performed by specifically-trained individuals. Please call the CNSM Safety Office at 562.985.5623, or dial campus 911 or use an emergency phone to call for immediate assistance.

**PLEASE NOTE: IF YOU or those you supervise (including students) WORK WITH HUMAN BLOOD or BLOOD-DERIVED PRODUCTS OR UNFIXED HUMAN TISSUES (other than cheek cells or urine), YOU GENERATE MEDICAL WASTE.** Medical waste (including used needles) must be placed in red Medical Waste containers and may NOT be autoclaved and/or disposed of on campus property. The regulations for the collection and disposal of medical waste are quite stringent; improper handling could result in serious fines from the City of Long Beach. **PLEASE CALL THE SAFETY OFFICE (562.985.5623) IF YOU THINK YOU MIGHT GENERATE MEDICAL WASTE.** Arrangements will be made for collection and disposal via an off-campus medical waste service.

Health & Safety Code, Div. 104, Part 14. {Medical Waste}.

California Code of Regulations, Title 8, section 5193 (d)(G) {Bloodborne Pathogens}.