

Performance Standard: Management of Sharps

Standard	Employers have effective arrangements in place to manage the risks from sharps injuries. This should be read in conjunction with the hazardous substances standard.
Rationale	Sharps injuries are a well-known risk in the health and social care sector. Sharps contaminated with an infected patient's blood can transmit more than 20 diseases, including hepatitis B, C and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Because of this transmission risk, sharps injuries can cause worry and stress to the many thousands who receive them.
Legal Reference	The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 Health and Safety (Sharps Instruments in Healthcare) Regulations 2013 (Sharp Regulations)

Criteria	Evidence	Legal References	Observations
The organisation has suitable sharps management policies and procedures in place.	Policies and procedures	Management of Health and Safety at work Regulation 1999, Regulation 10	
Suitable and sufficient risk assessments have been completed. These risks are reflected in the corporate and local risk register.	Risk register Generic and local risk assessments Local procedures	Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002, Regulation 6 Management of Health and Safety	
The organisation has taken steps to prevent or adequately control exposure to substances hazardous to health using risk hierarchies. Specific consideration is given to the additional risk controls including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> when sharps are used at work, safer sharps are used so far as is reasonably practicable needles must not be recapped unless risk assessment has identified risks of not recapping are greater than recapping if recapping is assessed as necessary the risk of injury is effectively controlled by use of a suitable appliance, tool or other equipment clearly marked and secure containers are placed close to where sharps are used. 	Risk assessments Procedures / systems of work Risk registers Training Internal / external audit reports	Health and Safety (Sharps Instruments in Healthcare) Regulations 2013, Regulation 4 Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 Regulation 7 Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, Regulation 3,4 and 5	

Criteria	Evidence	Legal References	Observations
Information, instruction and training is provided to those likely to be exposed to a risk of injury from a sharps instrument.	Policies and procedures Training syllabus Training records	Health and Safety (Sharps Instruments in Healthcare) Regulations 2013, Regulations 4(d)(1) 5(1)	
<p>There is a sufficiently robust system in place to allow employees to report incidents.</p> <p>Employee training includes the requirement for them to report all sharps injuries as soon as reasonably practicable.</p>	Reporting systems Monitoring of incidents	Health and Safety (Sharps Instruments in Healthcare) Regulations 2013, Regulation 7	
<p>When informed of a sharps injury the organisations has arrangements in place to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • record the incident • investigate the circumstances and cause • take any necessary to prevent recurrence. 	Recording documents Investigation reports Review of assessments	Health and Safety (Sharps Instruments in Healthcare) Regulations 2013, Regulation 6(1)	
<p>The organisation provides appropriate treatment and follow-up after a sharps injury. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • immediate access to medical advice • offered post-exposure prophylaxis • considering providing counselling. 	Policies and procedures Monitoring of incidents	Health and Safety (Sharps Instruments in Healthcare) Regulations 2013, Regulation 6(2)	
Procedures to control the risks are reviewed at suitable intervals to ensure their continuing effectiveness	Staff meetings Health and safety committee	Health and Safety (Sharps Instruments in Healthcare) Regulations 2013, Regulation 4(2)	

Criteria	Evidence	Legal References	Observations
The organisation consults and involves staff and safety representatives at all stages of risk assessment, planning and implementation.	Risk assessments meeting minutes Safety Reps documentation	Health and Safety (Sharps Instruments in Healthcare) Regulations 2013, Regulations 5(2) & 5(3) Management Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977	
There is regular monitoring of compliance with the sharps policy and procedures.	Inspection reports Staff meetings	Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, Regulation 5	

Further Guidance

Regulations, Approved Code of Practice and Guidance

- [The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 \(as amended\)](#) – Approved Code of Practice and guidance
- [Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974](#)
- [Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999](#)
- [Health and Safety \(Sharps Instruments in Healthcare\) Regulations 2013](#)

HSE guidance for more information visit HSE's website on Management of sharps

- [Health and Safety \(Sharps Instruments in Healthcare\) Regulations 2013 – Guidance for employers and employees](#)
- [Blood-borne viruses in the workplace - Guidance for employers and employees.](#)
- [Biological Agents: Managing the risks in laboratories and healthcare premises: Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens.](#)
- [Safety in Health Services Laboratories: Safe working and prevention of infection in clinical laboratories](#)

General guidance

- [Guidance for Clinical Health Care Workers: Protection Against Infection with Blood-borne Viruses; Recommendations of the Expert Advisory Group on AIDS and the Advisory Group on Hepatitis.](#)
- [The Health and Social Care Act 2008: Code of Practice for health and adult social care on the prevention and control of infections and related guidance](#)
- [EU Directive Council Directive 2010/32/EU \(2010\) Implementing the Framework Agreement on Prevention from Sharps Injuries in the Hospital and Healthcare Sector Concluded by HOSPEEM and EPSU. Official Journal of European Union](#)
- [Health Protection Agency. Blood Borne Viruses and Occupational Exposure](#)
- [NHS Employers Health and Safety Essential Guides](#)
- [European Bio Safety Network Toolkit](#)