Approvals

The signatures below certify that this procedure has been reviewed and accepted, and demonstrates that the signatories are aware of all the requirements retained herein and are committed to ensuring their provision.

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<th>Name</th>
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<td>Approved in monthly SMT meeting</td>
<td>N/A as existing policy</td>
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Amendment Record

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Policy

HIV, Hepatitis and other blood borne diseases can be transmitted by exposure to infected blood and body fluids. The main risk of exposure is by accidental injury with a sharp. HIV has a relatively low infectivity rate and therefore, presents less of an infection risk to health care workers than hepatitis B.

It is a statutory requirement under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 that an individual should take responsible care of himself or herself and other person affected by his work. It is imperative that all health care workers equip themselves with a sound knowledge base regarding the safe use and disposal of sharps. Non-compliance with these recommendations may carry medico-legal or health and safety legislation implications.

Procedure for safe use and disposal of sharps

- Do not keep syringes with needles or any sharps in pockets.
- Reduce accidents by not passing sharps from hand to hand.
- If skin contamination with blood is a risk, wear appropriate protective clothing when using needles and/or sharps.
- Always ask for assistance when carrying out a procedure requiring the use of a sharp.
- Take extreme care when clearing up after procedures that require the use of sharps.
- It is the personal responsibility of the person using the sharp to dispose of it safely.
- Always discard used sharps into an approved sharps container.
- It is advisable to take a sharps box to the point of use.
- Do not resheath used needles/sharps.
- Do not fill sharps boxes to more than ¾ full and ensure that they are closed securely.
- Ensure that sharps boxes are assembled correctly.
- Full sharps boxes should be sealed and the source of the box clearly labelled. They should then be sent for incineration.
- Sharps containers should be stored in a location which prevents injury to patients, visitors and staff. They should be below eye level and should not be kept on the floor.

Sharps boxes should comply with BS 7320.