



## MEMORANDUM

TO: All Generators of Sharps

FROM: George L. Accattato, Biological Safety Officer  
Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S)

SUBJECT: Proper Disposal of Sharps

DATE: November 13, 2006

Two recent situations suggest a need to share information on proper disposal of sharps (syringe needles, razor blades, slides, scalpel blades, etc.) Please forward the following guidelines to all persons in your department who generate sharps.

- Use only containers approved for sharps when used with biohazard classified materials.

(i.e. human blood & body fluids, infectious biological agents, etc.).

Your department can purchase them through most scientific or medical equipment suppliers. See attached samples from Fisher Scientific listing UNCW contract prices and ordering information.

- EH&S must approve containers not manufactured for the purpose of sharps disposal on a case by case basis. Ad-Hoc containers used for sharps without EH&S approval will not be picked up.
- Prior to placing a sharps container into service, ensure that the lid is firmly in place and secured.

(An unsecured lid can become a booby trap for the next person who may pick it up)

- Do not overfill the container. Fill only to the top of the lower section of the container.
- Place entire (disposable) syringe/needle assy. into containers. If you must recap needles use one handed technique. Do not bend or shear needles.

(Less handling means less chance of a stick)

- Place containers in locations where they are readily available for use yet unlikely to be knocked over or fall and at a level whereby one does not have to manipulate the container to deposit a sharps item.



- Needles, and other metal sharps should not be mixed with broken glassware. However, medical (human use) glass slides should be deposited in approved sharps containers.
- When full, ensure top opening is snapped shut. These containers are designed to prevent reopening once snapped shut. Tape (around container) over the opening to ensure contents cannot spill if dropped. This also serves as a reminder that container should not be used further.
- Call EH&S for pickups or questions. **962-7892, 962-3057.**

In closing, please note that although not all sharps are infectious they are handled by EH&S in the same manner as a biohazard and are disposed of through the biohazard waste stream. Remember to report any needle sticks, no matter how minor, to EH&S. We thank you for your consideration in making our job safe as well as your own.

Sincerely,

George Accattato