



Holroyd City Council Policy

“Sharps” Handling Policy

POLICY

Council has a commitment to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its workers under the Work Health Safety Act, 2011. A duty of care extends to persons other than workers who are not to be exposed to risks to their health while at the PCBU’s workplace.

It is Council policy that all “sharps” are to be handled in accordance with the procedures detailed within this policy.

Council reserves right to vary or revoke this policy at any time.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Council workers.

DEFINITIONS

“Sharps”. The term “Sharps” is most commonly used to describe hypodermic syringes. This term may also apply to any object to be used for cutting or penetration of the skin ie scalpel blades, lancets, intravenous giving sets etc.

CONTACT WITH SHARPS

Staff need to be aware of the dangers of blood born diseases such as HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis “A”, “B” or “C” which may be contracted by accidental contact with a “sharps” object. It cannot be assumed that a sharps object, commonly syringes, will be found in open view. Unprotected hands should not be placed anywhere which cannot be clearly seen ie full garbage bins, behind cisterns, toilet bowls etc Always ensure that objects to be picked up ie rubbish bags etc are kept well away from the body (see handling procedures).

HANDLING & DISPOSAL OF SHARPS

All staff who may come into contact with sharps objects must apply the following methods for safe handling:

- Regard all found sharps objects as potentially infectious
- Wear leather or heavy duty gloves while using tongs to pick up syringes by their barrel or when picking up refuse on the ground particularly if the contents cannot be seen ie plastic shopping bags, paper bag or other soft container.
- Do not walk long distances with a sharps object
- Immediately place discarded needle/syringes into puncture-proof Sharps Containers only. Never try to replace the cap on a needle.
- Place the sharp end first into the container ie pointing it away from the body
- Drop the item in rather than push, do NOT place hand inside the sharps container
- Ensure the Sharps Container is properly closed. Replace these containers when estimated 75% full or at manufacturer’s instructions.

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OBTAINING SHARPS CONTAINERS

Sharps containers can be obtained from the Depot Store and issued as requested. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure that appropriate workers have these containers available in their vehicles at all times. The driver of the vehicle should request a replacement container at the time of exchange. Sharps containers may be disposed of by returning them to the Depot store where they are placed in a locked wheelie bin for appropriate disposal.

DISPOSING OF USED NEEDLES THROUGH CUSTOMER SERVICE

Council provides a disposal service for residents with illness/disabilities that requires the regular use of needles. A sharps container is available for users to dispose of used needles.

In providing this service it is the responsibility of the person disposing to place the needles in the container. Staff in Customer Service are only required to place the container on the counter and return it to its storage place.

Under no circumstance are Customer Service staff to place the needles into the container.

PROCEDURE IN THE EVENT OF A NEEDLE STICK INJURY

- Encourage the wound to bleed by squeezing or pinching the skin around the wound for approx one minute
- Thoroughly wash affected area with soap and running water then apply an antiseptic wipe over the area and cover with a dressing or bandaid
- Report the injury to your supervisor and seek medical attention as soon as possible at any of the following locations, or from a doctor of your choice:

Quality Occupational Health
Unit 2/2-6 Gladstone Street, Merrylands 2160
Telephone: 9897 7699 Fax: 9897.7390
Monday to Friday Hours: 8.00am – 5.00pm

OR

Westmead Hospital - Emergency Unit
Hawkesbury Rd, Westmead 2145
Telephone: 9845-5555
Hours: All hours 7 Days

Familyland Medical Centre
25 Memorial Avenue, Merrylands 2160
Ph: (02) 9637-5255
Fax: (02) 9637-4916
Monday, Wednesday 9.00am - 2pm
Tuesday 9am - 6pm
Thursday 9am – 4pm
Friday 9am – 2pm
Sunday 9am – 1pm (but may vary, call to confirm)

- Appropriate treatment will be given by the treating Doctor and blood will be taken for testing.
- Arrange Counselling if the staff member requires this; it is strictly confidential. Feeling anxious is a common and natural response after a needle stick injury. Information will be provided by the doctor and treatment may include a course of Hepatitis B vaccinations (if you have never had this vaccination)
- The doctor will also give advice on the possible need and the timing of HIV, Hepatitis B or Hepatitis C testing if required, depending on the type of injury and other factors.

Further Information:

Needle Clean Up Hotline 1800 633 353

HIV Information Line 1800 451 600

Fact Sheet: NSW Department of Health