

HEALTHWEST

Procedure

No. 07-014

Revised by: Effective Date: January 22, 1997  
Revised Date: June 26, 2018

Environment of Care Committee

Approved by: Subject: Managing Sharps

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I. PURPOSE

To assure all Sharps materials are handled properly and in a manner according to Bloodborne Pathogens and other infectious disease protocol.

II. APPLICATION

All employees of HealthWest.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. Sharps - Items which can penetrate the skin (needles, lancets, blades, broken glass) and may, during their use, have potential to become contaminated with body fluids.
- B. Bloodborne Pathogens - Those pathogens which live and multiply in blood or blood products and cause diseases.
- C. Biohazard Box – Sturdy, sealable cardboard containers that have been labeled, tagged, or color coded as potentially infectious.
- D. Sharps Container – Rigid, puncture-resistant biohazard container specifically designed to hold contaminated sharps. It must be closable and leak proof on the sides and bottom.

IV. PROCEDURE

- A. Needles shall not be purposely bent, recapped, or broken by hand.
- B. Sharps containers:
  - 1. Must be readily and easily accessible.

2. Must not be overfilled (up to 3/4 full only).
3. Must be properly labeled or color coded as a biohazard.
4. Must be closed immediately prior to removal or replacement.
5. Must be replaced after 90 days of starting use, or when 3/4 full per OSHA regulations.

C. Pickup/Transport Procedure

1. The nurse will notify the Infection Control Practitioner (ICP), Safety Coordinator, or appropriately trained Nurse of the need to retrieve used sharps containers from a generating facility.
2. The Nurse will inform ICP or Safety Coordinator of the need for replacement sharps containers (size and number).
3. The ICP or Site Safety Officer/designee will go to each site in a county vehicle with red Biohazard Bags and a supply of replacement sharps containers.
4. The ICP, Safety Coordinator, or appropriately trained Nurse will complete a Medical Waste Transport Slip (HW form A183) available at each site, listing the type, size, and quantity of containers to be transported and take it with the sharps container(s) to the med pod @ the Mental Health Center.
5. The ICP, Safety Coordinator, or appropriately trained nurse will pick up used sharps containers. The sharps must be in EITHER a sealed Biohazard container OR a container within a Biohazard bag and will be placed in the locked trunk of the county vehicle and returned to the Mental Health Center for storage pending disposal.
6. Used sharps containers will be put in a large Biohazard Box located in the locked metal cabinet in the med pod at the Mental Health Center. The completed medical waste transport slip will be placed in the designated folder inside the cabinet. A key to the locked cabinet is available in the Nursing Sample medication room and with the Infection Control Practitioner.
7. The ICP, Safety Coordinator, or appropriately trained Nurse will notify the Site Safety Officer prior to the Biohazard Box being full, or within ninety (90) days of its first use, and nurse will contact the transporter for its removal.

D. Disposal

1. The Biohazard Box is to be disposed of by a licensed Waste System within ninety (90) days of its first use.
2. The Safety Coordinator shall keep in his/her files the Certificates that ensure the proper disposal by the licensed waste system.

E. Requirements regarding the transportation and transporter

1. The Biohazard Box must meet required specifications of the U.S.D.O.T. and needs to be lined with a bag.
2. The Biohazard Box must have written on the outer surface the number UN3291 and the words "REGULATED MEDICAL WASTE" with red marker in letters no less than one (1) inch in height.
3. Transporter must have in his/her possession a completed medical waste transport slip which also lists an Emergency Contact person and phone number in case of an accident.
4. Driver/transporter must have training and equipment to respond appropriately if a spill should occur.

V. TRAINING

- A. An in-service training will be conducted by qualified persons upon hire for all staff who will be using/handling sharps.
- B. Updated training shall be conducted annually or if any significant changes occur.
- C. A record of the Sharps Training shall be kept in the Human Resources Files.
- D. Non-managerial staff will be solicited for information on the effectiveness of any safe medical sharps used by the agency on an annual basis through the completion of the Sharps Safety Evaluation form.
- E. The ICP will monitor the effectiveness of the Sharps procedures annually or if any significant changes occur by reviewing the data.

VI. REFERENCES

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)  
Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)  
Department of Transportation (USDOT)  
Michigan Medical Waste Regulatory Act of 1990, Section 13811, pp. 3-5, Section 13817, pp. 6,  
and Section 13821, pp. 7