



In the last few weeks at the University of Kentucky we have had three sharps injuries caused by sharps not being disposed of properly.

1. Needle in the general trash.
2. Scalpel in the general trash.
3. Cannula left in a carcass.

Please place sharps in the proper disposal container provided to ensure everyone's safety during their time at the University of Kentucky.

HOW YOUR ACTIONS CAN EXPOSE OTHERS TO SHARPS INJURIES:

Improper Disposal of Sharps

Waste disposal requirements protect custodians and other waste handlers.

- Sharps should never be mixed with regular trash
- Custodians can suffer needlesticks or cuts when handling trash bags that contain sharps
- All sharps should be disposed of in labeled or color-coded, leak and puncture proof, closable sharps containers.

Poor Housekeeping

Maintaining an orderly and clean work environment helps prevent injuries

- Coworkers could inadvertently contact sharps that are left on the benchtop
- Sharps left on the benchtop could become mixed with other materials that are thrown into the regular trash

Who is at Risk?

- Lab Personnel
- Housekeeping Employees
- Maintenance Employees
- Visitors

Sharps:

Objects that can penetrate the skin, such as: needles, scalpels, broken glass, broken capillary tubes and exposed ends of dental wires.

Bloodborne Pathogens:

Infectious microorganisms present in blood that could cause disease in humans. Pathogens like Hepatitis B Virus can live on contaminated object for up to seven days.

OSHA Regulations:

Handling of sharps contaminated with bloodborne pathogens are covered by the Code of Federal Regulations, under the heading 29 CFR 1910.1030.

Training:

Environmental Health and Safety conducts Bloodborne Pathogens training for employees who are or could potentially be exposed to bloodborne pathogens. Training schedule is posted at <http://ehs.uky.edu/classes/>.

How to Minimize the Risk

1. Dispose of all sharp materials in the proper waste container.
2. Place the proper sharps waste container directly next to your work station.
3. Properly dispose of sharps as soon as you are done working with them.
4. Do not allow the sharps container to become more than three-quarters full.
5. If you notice sharps in the regular trash, separate and label the trash bag or container.
6. Practice good housekeeping.
7. When cleaning up after an experiment, check to ensure that sharps are not mixed with other trash on the benchtop .
8. Never recap, remove, bend, shear, or break needles after use-dispose of the needle immediately.

Please remember....

Be considerate of your colleagues!

Good housekeeping and proper waste disposal are meant to protect you and protect others!