

## LABORATORY SHARPS WASTE MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE

Revised November 2006

This procedure applies to the disposal of all sharps at the University of Pennsylvania. Sharps include both infectious waste used sharps and sharps that pose a safety hazard to custodians and other personnel. All sharps must be segregated according to hazard class and disposed in infectious waste sharps containers.

Refer questions about the disposal of sharps to EHRS at 215-898-4453 or email the office at [ehrs@ehrs.upenn.edu](mailto:ehrs@ehrs.upenn.edu).

### Definitions:

**Sharp:** any device/item having corners, edges, or projections capable of cutting or piercing the skin.

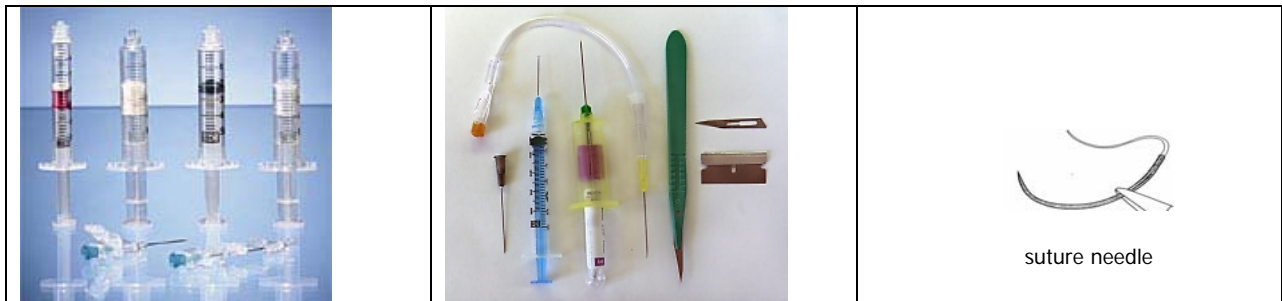
**Infectious Waste Used Sharps (Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection definition):** Sharps, including hypodermic needles, syringes, (with or without the attached needle), pasteur pipettes, scalpel blades, blood vials, needles with attached tubing, culture dishes, suture needles, slides, cover slips and other broken or unbroken glass or plasticware that have been in contact with infectious agents or that have been used in animal or human patient care or treatment, at medical, research or industrial laboratories.

**Infectious Waste Sharps Containers:** Containers that are non-breakable, leakproof, impervious to moisture, rigid, tightly lidded, puncture resistant, red in color and marked with the universal biohazard symbol.



### Procedures

1. Containers must be purchased by the user and placed near the area of sharps waste generation in the work area or laboratory. They must be disposed when no more than 3/4 full and must not be overfilled.
2. The following items (whether contaminated with infectious material or not) are considered sharps at Penn and must be disposed in infectious waste sharps containers and *discarded as infectious waste*.



- Needles (including suture needles)
- Syringes with or without needles
- Needles from vacutainers
- Needles with attached tubing
- **ALL** Blades (razors, scalpels, X-acto, etc.)

**Needles must not be separated from syringes prior to discard. All needles and syringes must be disposed as units. The use of safe needle devices is recommended. Recapping of needles is prohibited.**



3. Glassware or plasticware contaminated with infectious material and glassware or plasticware with sharp edges or points contaminated with infectious material must be disposed into an infectious waste sharps container including:

- Contaminated Pasteur pipettes
- Contaminated glass slides or coverslips
- Contaminated broken or unbroken glassware or plasticware (including suture needles)

4. Sharps in the following hazard classes must be disposed of as follows:

**Chemical Contaminated Sharps** must be disposed through the *infectious waste* stream in a sharps containers marked "*Chemical Contaminated Sharps - Do Not Autoclave*". Labels are available on request from EHRS.



**Non-infectious Sharps** must also be disposed in a sharps container through the *infectious waste* stream. Containers of non-infectious sharps may be discarded as *infectious waste without prior autoclaving if the label is defaced as shown*.



**NOTE:** Non-infectious sharps may be commingled with infectious waste sharps or chemical contaminated sharps waste. If this is done, they must be managed as described for the respective category of sharps.

**Radiation-Contaminated Sharps** must be placed in a sharps container marked with the radioactive materials label. When the sharps container is no more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  full, deface the biohazard and radioactive materials labels and place the closed container in the appropriate dry radioactive waste container. **Do not discard as infectious waste.** EHRS will remove the radioactive waste.



**Radiation/Biohazard-Contaminated Sharps** must be treated (usually with 1:10 Bleach) to deactivate the biohazard prior to placement in a sharps container marked with the radioactive materials label. When the sharps container is no more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  full, deface the biohazard and radioactive materials labels and place the closed container in the appropriate dry radioactive waste container. **Do not discard as infectious waste.** EHRS will remove the radioactive waste.



5. Contact your building administrator for information about infectious waste disposal in your department or School.