



# Management of sharps

LCC IPC Guidance

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### Management of sharps

Sharps include needles, lancets, razors, nail clippers, scissors and any other sharp instrument which may prick, scratch or cut you and which has been contaminated with blood from a client or an unknown source.

Sharps can also include bites and scratches from humans and animals. Injuries from sharps are a cause of exposure to blood borne viruses and other infections.

Those working with some client groups and in certain work areas may be at a greater risk from sharp injuries and exposure to blood borne viruses and will therefore need to take extra caution.

Services must have procedures in place for post exposure to disease in the event an injury occurs.

Employees must be trained in the safe handling and disposal of sharps.

#### **In order to reduce the risk of a sharps injury:**

- Remember, sharps safety begins with you.
- Avoid handling sharps whenever possible.
- Remember sharps may be hidden, always use the protective equipment provided.
- Great care and attention must be taken when the handling of sharps is unavoidable.
- Personal protective equipment (gloves, aprons etc.) can reduce the risk of infection from a sharps injury.
- Avoid directly passing sharps from person to person.
- Never attempt to re-cap or re-sheath needles.
- Ensure a correct sharps container is available at the point of use, within arm's reach, ideally at eye level.
- Sharps containers must conform to *British Standard BS EN ISO 23907:2012*
- Ensure the appropriate sized container is available for the activity and ensure that it has been correctly assembled.
- Ensure used sharps containers are labelled appropriately before disposal.
- Seal and dispose of containers when they are three quarters full.