

## Safe Disposal of Metal Sharps

### POLICY STATEMENT (OVERVIEW)

In accordance with university guidelines, all sharps must be disposed of through Environmental Health and Safety. Sharps include syringes with or without safety features, pins, needles, razor blades, disposable utility knife blades, scalpels, IV tubing, lancettes, scissors, knives and any other metal item that could puncture or cut an individual.

Sharps must be collected in containers that are rigid, leak proof, puncture-resistant and sealable. Environmental Health and Safety does not provide sharps containers, but they may be purchased through most lab supply companies or at on campus stock rooms.

Any regular trash found containing sharps will not be removed by custodial service. Improper disposal of sharps presents a risk to laboratory and custodial workers, while disposal into a biohazard or chemical waste container not specifically designed and approved for sharps disposal poses a risk to laboratory workers and waste handlers.

### SHARPS DISPOSAL METHODS

#### **Biologically contaminated:**

Items used with biologically hazardous materials must be disposed of within an approved and appropriately labeled container. Once the sharps container has become two thirds filled, it may be placed in a biohazardous material collection box provided by Environmental Health and Safety. If the lab or clinic does not create any other biohazardous waste, the plastic sharps container will suffice.

For removal:

Danforth Campus:

- Contact the Biology Stockroom (935-6863) for information regarding disposal.

Medical School Campus:

- Submit an on-line request for pick-up form on the Environmental Health and Safety website at: <http://ehs.wustl.edu/hazmats/infwaste.htm>

Note: Infectious waste cannot be taken away prior to the submission of a pick-up request.

Cost:

Environmental Health and Safety charges 28 cents per pound for infectious waste disposal. This fee helps cover the costs associated with vendor transportation and incineration as well as the boxes and liners.

**Chemically contaminated:**

Sharps contaminated with hazardous chemicals must be labeled and disposed of as hazardous waste. Collection containers should be rigid, leak proof, puncture-resistant and sealable but must not indicate biohazardous contents with colors or symbols. All guidelines for labeling, storing and disposing of hazardous waste should be followed for such items. Further guidance on these rules can be found at the Environmental Health and Safety website, [ehs.wustl.edu](http://ehs.wustl.edu).

For Removal:

- Submit an on-line request for pick-up form on the Environmental Health and Safety website at: <http://ehs.wustl.edu/hazmats/hazwaste.htm>

Note: Hazardous waste cannot be taken away prior to the submission of a pick-up request.

**Radiologically contaminated:**

Sharps contaminated with radioactive materials must be labeled and disposed of as radioactive waste. Collection containers should be rigid, leak proof, puncture-resistant and sealable but must not indicate biohazardous contents with colors or symbols. All guidelines for labeling, storing and disposing of radioactive waste should be followed for such items. For more information, please see <https://radsafety.wustl.edu/documents/manual/14-RadioactiveWasteStorageAndDisposal.pdf>.

**Uncontaminated:**

Sharps that have never been used with chemical, biological or radiological materials may be disposed of within a rigid, leak proof, puncture-resistant, sealable container. This container should not indicate biohazardous contents with colors or symbols.

For Removal:

- Once the container has become two thirds filled, place a completed hazardous waste sticker on it and list the contents as “uncontaminated sharps.”
- Submit an on-line request for pick-up form on the Environmental Health and Safety website at: <http://ehs.wustl.edu/hazmats/hazwaste.htm>

Note: Waste cannot be taken away prior to the submission of a pick-up request.

For more information on any of the above methods, please contact Environmental Health and Safety at 362-6816.

### **REASON FOR POLICY**

This policy was adopted to ensure standardized sharps disposal methods throughout the University.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES**

Every individual using metal sharps must adhere to disposal guidelines.

### **SANCTIONS**

Improper disposal of metal sharps will result in an automatic failure of the EH&S annual laboratory safety inspection and may result in regulatory fines or penalties. All penalties or fines are the responsibility of the University department in which the infraction occurred. Grant funding may not be used to pay regulatory fines or penalties.