



# Sharps Guidance



'Sharps' are needles, blades (such as scalpels) and other medical instruments that are necessary for carrying out healthcare work and could cause an injury by cutting or pricking the skin.

**sportscotland** have a duty to suitably and sufficiently assess the risk of sharps use and injuries The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002. **sportscotland** is aware of our legal duties under existing legislation and the new regulations, which emphasise carrying out suitable and sufficient risk assessments on the prevention of sharps injuries.

Where risks are identified, line managers must take steps to avoid the unnecessary use of sharps. Where it is not reasonably practicable to avoid the use of sharps, we are required to:

- Use sharps incorporating protection mechanisms where it is reasonably practicable to do so;
- Prevent the recapping of needles; and
- Place secure containers and instructions for safe disposal of medical sharps close to the work area.

If we are procuring single use sharps containers, we must procure containers that comply with the minimum standard ISO 23907-1 which specifies requirements for single-use sharps containers intended to hold potentially hazardous sharps medical waste with or without sharps protection features, e.g., scalpel blades, trocars, hypodermic needles and syringes.

Sharps containers should be dated on assembly and sealed and disposed of when the manufacturer's marked line is reached **or** within a set period identified through local risk assessment, whichever is soonest.

**sportscotland** will work with line managers to:

- Review current procedures and risk assessments to ensure that they are complying with existing legislation;
- Assess the need to implement further control measures including safety-engineered devices, where possible, to reduce the risk of injuries;
- Where indicated by risk assessments introduce new safety measures, equipment and information and training to prevent sharps injuries among employees;
- Ensure adequate resources are available to support the review and the purchase and introduction of new safety measures.

Employees using sharps must be doing the following:

- All sharps will be handled as little as possible and must be disposed of safely in the appropriate container;
- Ensure they are familiar with local procedures and risk assessments;
- Ensure they are following safe systems of work;
- Hands/fingers to not be placed in the sharps container to deposit or remove items;
- Do not recap or resheath used needles;
- Report any concerns about sharps safety to their line manager or the Health and Safety Officer; and
- Report all sharps injuries via the Accident/Incident Report Form (AIRF), and ensure that their line manager is made aware of injuries.

Line managers have the following responsibilities:

- Ensure safe systems of work have been written and employees have been instructed on them;
- Ensure that all employees through instruction are aware of the hazards, risks and control measures relative to the use of sharps;
- Ensure all employees have received training relative to sharps and it is up to date with appropriate records kept; and
- Be assured that sharps waste is appropriately disposed of at point of use direct to a sharps container.