

Clinical Process Instruction Manual

Safe Handling, Use, and Disposal of Sharps Process Instruction

Policy:

Trillium Gift of Life Network (TGLN) is committed to providing a safe and healthy working environment for all staff. TGLN will demonstrate its commitment by providing financial, physical and human resources to decrease the risk of transmission of infectious diseases through injuries from sharps medical devices and exposure to blood and body fluids. Sharps are devices that are capable of cutting or penetrating the skin or any part of an employee's body. Some examples of sharps include needles, sutures, lancets, blades and clinical glass.

To this end, TGLN will implement the use of safety engineered medical sharps (SEMS), where available, and other safe work practices aimed at reducing the risks of injury from sharp objects wherever possible. TGLN is also committed to ensuring that any person in need of first aid treatment will receive such treatment promptly and efficiently from a certified first aid responder.

Further legislative requirements as per the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA).

This process instruction applies to all Surgical Recovery Coordinators, Tissue Recovery Coordinators, Multi Tissue Recovery Coordinators, Clinical Specialist – Organ, Clinical Specialist – Tissue, Manager – Tissue Recovery, Manager – PRC Organ, Manager – Surgical Recovery—Organ, Inventory Assistant, and Administrative Assistants – PRC Organ, PRC – Tissue, Hospital Programs.

Process:

General

1. Staff shall report to their Manager or designate, any use of non-safety engineered medical sharps which have not been previously approved for use in the workplace.
2. Staff shall report to their Manager or designate, any unsafe acts, hazards, equipment problems or any other untoward issue immediately.
3. Staff shall participate in regular training as established by TGLN.

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Safe Handling and Use of Sharps

4. All needles and sharps shall be handled in a manner that will not endanger the health or safety of the user or others.
5. Safety-engineered needles and medical devices shall be used when such alternatives are available.
6. It is the responsibility of the user to ensure appropriate handling and safe disposal of needles and medical sharps.
7. Personal protective equipment (PPE) shall be worn appropriate to the risk when handling sharps (e.g., gloves). See *Routine Practices and Personal Protective Equipment Process Instruction, CPI-9-1504*. It should be noted that nitrile gloves will not protect against puncture wounds and the safe working practices outlined in this CPI should be adhered to in order to prevent injury.
8. Staff shall ensure that equipment necessary for performing a procedure is available within arm's reach.
9. Sharps shall only be uncovered or unwrapped prior to immediate use.
10. If multiple sharps will be used during a procedure, staff shall organize the work area (e.g., procedure tray) so that the sharp is always pointed away from the user.
11. Sharps shall be handled so the user's fingers are kept away from the tip of the object.
12. Needles shall never be recapped, bent or removed.
13. Uncapped needles or other medical sharps shall not be left unattended or covered with a towel or drape.
14. Staff shall make it common practice to let others know they are working with sharps, especially when the sharp object is set down or picked it up.
15. Staff shall avoid hand-to-hand passage of sharps. A predetermined neutral zone or tray for placing and retrieving used sharps shall be used.
16. If using a safety engineered medical sharp (SEMS) device, staff shall activate the safety feature as the procedure is being completed, observing for audio or visual cues that the feature is locked in place.

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Safe Disposal of Sharps

17. All needles and sharps shall be immediately disposed of in a manner that will not endanger the health or safety of the user or others.
18. PPE shall be worn appropriate to the risk when disposing of sharps. See *Routine Practices and Personal Protective Equipment Process Instruction, CPI-9-1504*.
19. Staff shall identify the location of the sharps disposal container; if moveable, place it as close to the point-of-use as appropriate for immediate disposal of the sharp. If the sharp is reusable, staff shall determine in advance where it will be placed for safe handling after use.
20. Staff shall place biohazardous medical sharps into a yellow puncture resistant sharps container labelled with the words “sharps waste” and with the international biohazard symbol and the word “BIOHAZARD.” See Exhibits 1 and 2.
21. Sharps shall never be discarded into bags of biological waste or regular trash.
22. During clean-up of biohazardous or chemical spills, sharps should not be handled with hands. Instead, forceps found in the spill kits should be used. If forceps are not available, staff shall carefully pick up the needle and syringe with the sharp edge furthest away from the fingers and body. See *Biohazard and Chemical Spill Clean-up Process Instruction, CPI-9-1503*.
23. Staff shall ensure the sharps container being used is large enough to accommodate the entire device.
24. When the sharps container is full to the fill line indicator (or 3/4 full), staff shall securely close it shut so that it is ready for disposal. See *Hazardous Waste Disposal Process Instruction, CPI-9-1506*.
25. Staff shall never reach into a sharps container.
26. Sharps shall never be forced into sharps container and the container should never be overfilled.
27. Staff shall never attempt to re-open a sharps container that has been closed or locked.
28. Staff shall ensure that the sharps container being used shows no rupture, leakage, or deterioration that could cause injury to a person during its reuse and/or transport.
29. Following disposal of the sharp, staff shall safely remove PPE and perform hand hygiene. See *Routine Practices and Personal Protective Equipment Process Instruction, CPI-9-1504*.

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In Case of a Sharps Injury

30. Staff injured by a sharp or SEMS, in the course of performance of work duties, shall follow the processes outlined in the *Worker Injury and Exposure Process Instruction, CPI-9-1502*.

Records:

Record Name	Form No. (if applicable)	Record Holder	Record Location	Record Retention Time (as a minimum)
Employee Incident Form	N/A	Human Resources	Human Resources	16 years

References:

- Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)
- *Worker Injury and Exposure Process Instruction, CPI-9-1502*
- *Universal Precautions and Personal Protective Equipment Process Instruction, CPI-9-1504*
- *Hazardous Waste Disposal Process Instruction, CPI-9-1506*
- *Biohazard and Chemical Spill Clean-up Process Instruction, CPI-9-1503*
- TGLN Employee Incident Report
- Standards for Tissue Banking, American Association of Tissue Banks, United States, 14th edition, 2017. J3.200 (2)
- CSA Z316.6-14 Sharps Injury Protection
- PIDAC Best Practices for Environmental Cleaning for Prevention and Control of Infections (2012)
- CDC Workbook for Designing, Implementing, and Evaluating a Sharps Injury Prevention Program.

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Exhibit 1: International Biohazard Symbol



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Exhibit 2: Biohazardous Sharps Container

