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| **CAL-HS-PD-4503** |
| **Sharps** |
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| **Procedure** |
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# PURPOSE

1. To control and minimise injuries and infections resulting from the deliberate or inadvertent handling or coming into contact with “Sharps” in the course of employment.

# DEFINITION

1. “Sharps” will be defined as any loose object with a sharp edge or point.
2. “Contaminated sharps” will be any sharp that has been contaminated by a substance which could cause harm to humans.

# HAZARDS

1. The main hazard from sharps will be cuts or puncture wounds.
2. Contaminated sharps will have the additional hazard of bacteriological or other contamination that may enter the wound produced by the sharp and thereby infect the injured party.

# RISK

1. The risk from cuts or puncture wounds will be tissue, nerve or tendon damage.
2. The risk from contaminated sharps will be primarily from “Blood Borne viruses” and may typically be “AIDS” (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) or Hepatitis, both of which are classified as blood borne pathogens.
3. Other infections may enter open wounds and abrasions that have not be properly treated and dressed. These will include tetanus and other zoonoses carried on dirt and earth, especially those which have been contaminated by animal faeces and urine.

# PRECAUTIONS

1. All sharps should be regarded as being contaminated and contact should be avoided.
2. Where the presence of such objects might be suspected, then hand contact with the area should be avoided. This will include drains, tobys, bins, boxes, voids, etc. and in all areas open to the public.
3. Where a sharp is positively identified, then it should not be interfered with unless this is unavoidable.
4. Where a sharp has to be moved, then suitable PPE should be worn, and the object should be handled remotely, using tongs or similar devices (a pair of pliers would be effective).
5. Where a sharp, such as a used Stanley knife blade, is produced in the course of a work task, then it will be handled with due care.

# DISPOSAL

1. All sharps collected should be stored in a closed container which cannot be punctured by the sharp.
2. The container should be clearly labelled and should be stored in a secure place.
3. The company supervisor should be contacted to arrange for the safe disposal of the object.

# FIRST AID

1. The first aider should always wear protective gloves when dealing with any injury.
2. Where the injuries result from contact with a non-suspect sharp, then standard first aid procedures should be adopted. Treatment will depend on the nature and severity of the injury.
3. Where the sharp is suspect of being contaminated, then the first aider should encourage bleeding of the wound. No attempt should be made to suck out, or otherwise touch the wound or the blood unprotected.
4. Where contamination is suspected, the injured party should be encouraged to report to an A & E department or a G.P.
5. Where the injury is from a known contaminated source, then the injury should be reported under RIDDOR.
6. Cover all open wounds with a dressing to prevent entry contaminations, such as zoonoses.

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