



Safe handling and disposal of needles

This Safety Information Sheet is aimed at people who may be required to handle and dispose of discarded or used hypodermic needles and syringes. This information sheet forms part of the control measures required to ensure your health and safety.

What are the risks?

Used hypodermic needles and syringes must always be treated as being potentially contaminated.

Should the skin be punctured or broken by a needle through careless handling or accidental contact, there is the potential for infection to occur, e.g. HIV, Hepatitis B or C

If you find a discarded needle or syringe please take the following precautions.

Ensure that you have appropriate equipment readily available (sharps box, gloves, first aid kit and pincer tool)

- Check your skin and cover any cuts and abrasions with a waterproof covering (e.g. waterproof plaster).
- Broken skin on your hands (e.g. eczema) can be covered with waterproof gloves.
- Look for needles in the area around where you have found one.
- But DO NOT use your hands to feel for needles.

How to safely dispose of a needle

- Needles must be picked up with a pincer tool (tongs/litter picker/'helping hand'), shovels, gloved hand (puncture resistant gloves), dustpans/gloves or tweezers. NB a litter picker and puncture resistant gloves are situated by the filing cabinet in the church office.
- Never attempt to re-sheath needles.
- Always dispose of needles in an approved 'sharps box' (kept on the filing cabinet in the office).
- Always take the sharps box to the needle, not the needle to the sharps box.
- Place the sharps box on an even surface and open the sharps box before picking up the needle.

- Always pick up the needle by the blunt end (the plastic fitting where it is fixed onto a syringe) using the litter picker or other pincer tool. If there is more than one needle, pick them up one at a time.
- Syringes should also be picked up using the litter picker or other pincer tool and placed in the sharps box.
- Do not overfill sharps boxes. When $\frac{3}{4}$ full, sharps containers must be sealed and disposed of as clinical waste. Please contact Mick Tinkler, Paul or Diane Marshall to arrange disposal.
- Ensure that a member of the leadership team is informed as soon as possible of any needles and syringes that you find. Record the find in the control book that is located with the sharps box.

Please note. Only in exceptional circumstances where there is an immediate danger to vulnerable people (e.g. children's playground) and a sharps box is not available may a rigid container (e.g. drinks can or glass bottle) be used for the temporary collection (but not storage) of needles. There is a glass bottle situated in the church office which can be used as a back-up temporary storage device if for some reason the sharps box is not available.

What to do if you are injured by a needle (known as a needlestick injury):

- Encourage the wound to bleed for 1 to 2 minutes by squeezing the area of the wound. DO NOT suck the wound.
- Wash the area of the injury with soap and water. If soap and water is not available, the alcohol-free cleansing wipes provided in first aid kits should be used to wipe away any blood.
- Cover the wound with a plaster.

Follow up actions

- Immediately inform a member of the Leadership Team of any needlestick injury and complete a Personal Accident Report Form.
- Visit your GP and inform him/her of the accident. The GP will arrange for you to have initial blood tests which will usually be followed up by further tests at a latter date.
- Counselling and advice will also be offered to you.
- A member of the Leadership Team will investigate the incident, to identify how further needlestick injuries can be prevented.

Special Procedures

Cleaning Staff

People who clean the building should be particularly aware that hypodermic needles and syringes may be concealed in places such as behind radiators, in

cupboards, behind toilets, in toilet cisterns, etc. particular care should be taken when cleaning these areas. If the area to be cleaned cannot be clearly seen puncture resistant gloves must be worn whilst cleaning.

Children's Play Area

The outside children's play area should be searched for discarded needles and syringes before it is used by children. If the area to be searched cannot be clearly seen puncture resistant gloves must be worn.

The register for King's Kids should include a box for the person taking the register to initial to state whether the outside play area is to be used for the session. A second box should be initialled by the person who has carried out the check of the outside area.

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