

Safe Use of Sharps Containers

Saskatchewan's *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2020*, Section 31-8 states that an employer must provide readily accessible containers for waste needles, syringes, blades, clinical glass and other clinical items capable of causing a cut or puncture. The employer is to ensure that workers use the containers and that workers do not manually clip, bend, break or recap waste needles. Using containers as intended can eliminate the risk of a needle-stick injury.

The legislation requires that containers:

- have a fill line
- be clearly identified as containing hazardous waste; and
- be sturdy enough to resist puncture under normal conditions of use and handling until the containers are disposed of

Safe Use of Sharps Containers

- Only fill containers to the recommended level
- Never use force to push the lid onto an overfilled container
- Only use the container designed for the size of the syringe
- Only place the appropriate sharp in the appropriate sharps container

Eliminate the Risk of Injury

- Read and understand any cautions on the sharps containers
- Be aware of the task you are doing – eyes and mind on task
- Do not overfill the containers
- Replace containers as soon as they are full
- Do not use the containers for products other than its intended purpose
- Do not use containers that are marked for disposal
- Do not force any sharps into the container and do not force the lid onto the container
- Drop sharps straight down into containers
- Before you touch the container, always check for sharps that may be poking through and that the latching mechanism is working properly
- Ask for training/education on safe handling of sharps and sharps containers

If You See Any Unsafe Sharps Container

- Report it to your manager/supervisor
 - for example: if the latching mechanism does not work the way the manufacturer design it to, you could be at risk of injury. Inform your manager/supervisor who would then ensure the product concern form is filled out and sent to materials management or other designate
- Tell other workers not to touch/use the container; carefully and safely mark the item so that others don't put themselves at risk

Transporting Sharps Containers

Regulation 31-6 states that an employer shall develop and implement a process that ensures:

- waste (e.g., sharps) is contained in a secure, clearly labelled container that holds the contents safely
- that workers who generate, collect, transport waste are trained in safe work practices and procedures, provided with personal protective equipment (PPE), that are appropriate to the risks associated with the work
- that workers use the safe work practices and procedures and PPE

Safety Talk Discussion

Be Accountable: Choose safety - work safe - and go home injury free!

