

**SCHOOL OF MEDICINE - SHARPS POLICY**

1. This policy is applicable to the use of sharps by staff and students for teaching or preparation for teaching. Sharps are any item that may cause laceration or puncture wounds; needles, sharp-edged instruments, broken glassware, razors, spicules of bone.

2. Rules for all staff and students

- Use sharps injury prevention procedures.
- Use approved sharps containers which must be assembled correctly, never over-filled and sealed / labelled when the fill line is reached.
- Do not remove items from sharps containers. The temporary closure mechanism on sharps containers should be used when sharps container is not in use.
- Sharps containers should be located and secured in a safe position that avoids spillage and located at a height that allows the safe disposal of sharps. They should never be placed on the floor.
- Wear gloves when handling sharps or at other times when exposure to blood, other body fluids, non-intact skin or contaminated wound dressings might occur.
- Gather approved containers for the disposal of sharps, blood or other bodily fluids before beginning an activity.
- Use equipment that may reduce the incidence of being exposed to sharps, e.g. retractable needle devices.
- Handle sharps carefully to avoid injuries.
- Dispose of used needles immediately after use, dispose of needles and syringes as one single unit.
- Do not pass an exposed sharp to another person.
- Do not resheath used needles with needle covers
- Never try to manipulate/remove a sharp from its holding implement with your hands.
- Utilise needle/blade removal devices for removal of these where necessary, i.e. where single-use disposable blade devices are not available.

3. If an exposure incident should occur, the following steps should be taken to minimise the risk of harm from the exposure:

- a. Perform first aid to the exposed area immediately.
- b. Skin/tissues should be encouraged to bleed. Do not suck or rub the area.
- c. Wash/irrigate with warm running water and liquid non-antimicrobial soap. Do not scrub the area.
- d. The area should then be covered using a waterproof dressing.
- e. Eyes and mouth should be rinsed / irrigated with copious amounts of water. If contact lenses are worn, irrigation should be performed before and after removing these. Do not swallow the water which has been used for mouth rinsing following mucocutaneous exposure.

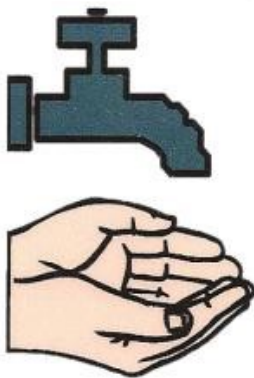
4. Any incidents where occupational exposure has occurred should be reported in line with the University incident reporting procedures. All names should be recorded. Near misses should also be clearly reported / documented. If the injury occurs out of hours attend the Minor Injury Department for advice.

# WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A SHARPS/NEEDLESTICK INJURY



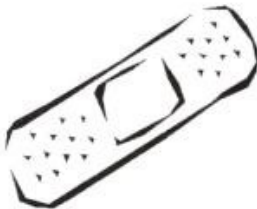
## **BLEED IT**

- Encourage the area to bleed



## **WASH/ IRRIGATE IT**

- with liquid non-antimicrobial soap and warm running water



## **COVER IT**

- with a waterproof dressing



## **REPORT IT**

- to the technician, or another member of staff. Ensure that the item that caused the injury is disposed of safely.

**For further advice contact the St Andrews community hospital on 01334 465683**

## University of St Andrews - School of Medicine Handbook

<b>Author:</b>	Executive Administrator (DCM)	<b>Approval Committee:</b>	
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### Version Control Record *(expand table as required)*

Date	Revision Description	Major Changes
21/03/2019	Minor update.	