

Sharps Safety: Protecting Yourself and Others

Sharps injuries are a serious occupational hazard in health care, with over 385,000 injuries reported annually in U.S. hospitals. These injuries can transmit hepatitis B, hepatitis C, HIV, and more than 20 other pathogens.



Tips for Avoiding Sharps-Related Injuries

Be Prepared

- » Organize your work area with appropriate sharps disposal containers within reach
- » Work in well-lit areas
- » Receive training on how to use sharps safety devices
- » Before handling sharps, assess any hazards — get help if needed
- » Use only KP-approved cutting devices for opening boxes and zip ties
- » Do not bring cutting devices from home

Be Aware

- » Keep the exposed sharp in view
- » Be aware of people around you
- » Stop if you feel rushed or distracted
- » Focus on your task
- » Avoid hand-passing sharps and use verbal alerts when moving sharps
- » Watch for sharps in linen, beds, on the floor, or in waste containers

Dispose of Sharps with Care

- » Be responsible for the device you use
- » Activate safety features after use
- » Dispose of devices in rigid sharps containers; do not overfill containers
- » Keep fingers away from the opening of sharps containers

TEAM ACTIVITY

Here are some activities for your team to assess and minimize risks associated with use of sharps.



Discuss sharps safety procedures at a team huddle.



Also use huddles to identify potential issues, such as location and/or inadequate supply of sharps safety containers.



Perform safety observations when team members use sharps devices, to help your team emphasize safe practices and minimize injury risks.

SMARTIE GOAL EXAMPLE

"Our team will conduct monthly rounding to identify and remove all non-safety sharps and cutting devices from the department beginning August 1, 2025 thru December 31, 2025."

Inclusive: *"We will ensure all staff — including those on morning and night shifts — is aware of the goal to remove non-safety sharps and cutting devices."*

Equitable: *"Sharing this practice with other departments will ensure all non-safety sharps are removed."*