



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

FAST FACT, REF FF:006:00, AUGUST 2016

HSE POLICY ON THE PREVENTION OF SHARPS INJURIES 2016

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This FAST FACT provides a brief overview of the **HSE Policy on the Prevention of Sharps Injuries 2016**

The policy can be downloaded [here](#).

DID YOU KNOW THAT more than one million sharps injuries are estimated to occur in the European Union each year. This Policy provides advice and guidance on sharps risks and their management.



POLICY STATEMENT

In compliance with the European Union (Prevention of Sharps Injuries in the Healthcare Sector) Regulations 2014, the HSE is committed to eliminating or reducing the risk of exposure and hence all hazards associated with exposure to blood and bodily fluids from sharps injuries must be identified, the risks assessed, control measures identified and implemented.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to inform all Managers (Responsible Persons) and employees of the key issues to address when developing safe work practices for the prevention of sharps injuries.

SCOPE

This Policy applies to all employees and others working in the HSE including temporary employees, agency employees, students, volunteers, contractors and any employee contracted to provide services for the HSE.

HEALTH AND SAFETY LEGISLATION

- European Union (Prevention of Sharps Injuries in the Healthcare Sector) Regulations, 2014
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 and other relevant associated Regulations.



MANAGERS KEY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Managers must:

- Ensure that all hazards and risks associated with the risk of exposure to sharps injuries to include clinical procedures are identified, assessed and appropriate measures put in place to eliminate, control or minimise the risk
- Implement, monitor and review practices, procedures, control measures, risk assessment and findings of incident investigation as are necessary to avoid or reduce to the lowest level reasonably practicable the risk of sharps injury.

MANAGERS KEY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES CONT.

- Ensure a local procedure is in place for employees who have suffered an adverse event have access to treatment and follow up
- Report adverse event involving sharps in line with the *HSE Safety Incident Management Policy 2014*

EMPLOYEES KEY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Employees must:

- Adhere to this Policy, local procedures and safe systems of work and any associated risk assessments and risk controls.

NEVER recap needles.



- Report any defects in equipment or the place of work and any unsafe systems of work to the Responsible Person

Detailed Roles & Responsibilities are outlined in the HSE Policy on the Prevention of Sharps Injuries 2016

RISK ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Appendix 3 Sample Risk Assessment Forms

HAZARD & RISK DESCRIPTION	IMPACT/ CONSEQUENCES	EXISTING CONTROL MEASURES	ADDITIONAL CONTROLS REQUIRED	PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR ACTION	DATE DUE
Exposure to sharps (needles, scalpels, suture needles, etc.) due to inadequate disposal practices.	Needle stick injuries, lacerations, cuts, bruising, infection, tetanus, hepatitis, HIV, etc.	Adherence to the HSE Policy on the Prevention of Sharps Injuries 2016 Compliance with Staff manual training in line with Core Infection, Prevention & Control Knowledge Skills, A Framework Document, Nov 2015 Standard procedures are implemented in all clinical areas and for all clinical procedures. Safely sharps in use. An education programme for Hepatitis B vaccination is offered free of charge to all relevant employees. Guidelines for the Emergency Management of Injuries, September 2012 are followed in the event of an injury. Sharps bins suitable to size and shape are available for the disposal of sharps at the site of use. Sharps bins are stored with the temporary closure in place when not in use, in a secure area to prevent unauthorised access. Environment Exhausting of needles is prohibited.	Clipping to HPA, including, supervision and audit.	Responsible person (line manager) and relevant employees.	ongoing
Use of sharps	Needle stick injuries, lacerations, cuts, bruising, infection, tetanus, hepatitis, HIV, etc.	Adherence to the HSE Policy on the Prevention of Sharps Injuries 2016 Compliance with Staff manual training in line with Core Infection, Prevention & Control Knowledge Skills, A Framework Document, Nov 2015 Standard procedures are implemented in all clinical areas and for all clinical procedures. Safely sharps in use. An education programme for Hepatitis B vaccination is offered free of charge to all relevant employees. Guidelines for the Emergency Management of Injuries, September 2012 are followed in the event of an injury. Sharps bins suitable to size and shape are available for the disposal of sharps at the site of use. Sharps bins are stored with the temporary closure in place when not in use, in a secure area to prevent unauthorised access. Environment Exhausting of needles is prohibited.	Clipping to HPA, including, supervision and audit.	Responsible person (line manager) and relevant employees.	ongoing
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Prevention of exposure to blood borne pathogens is an underlying principle of the Regulations. To ensure this preventative principle is followed sharps risk assessments must be undertaken to determine if existing workplace controls are adequate. Where additional controls are identified they must take account of the hierarchy of controls and principles of prevention.

The risk assessment process for a given task comprises of the following **FOUR STEPS** which are detailed in Appendix I *HSE Policy on the Prevention of Sharps Injuries 2016*:

- Step 1—Identify the hazards**
- Step 2—Identify the risks**
- Step 3—Assess and Rate the Risk**
- Step 4—Identify additional control measures required.**

Ultimately the chosen approach to risk control should follow the General Principles of Prevention and include any specific measures detailed in the Biological Agents Regulations, 2013 and Sharps Regulations, 2014.

A STEP-BY-STEP PROCEDURE FOR POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

A step-by-step procedure to implement the *HSE Policy on the Prevention of Sharps Injuries 2016* is given in Appendix V of the Policy.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

- European Union (Prevention of Sharps Injuries in the Healthcare Sector) Regulations, 2014
- HSE Policy on the Prevention of Sharps Injuries 2016
- FAST FACT, Ref FF:008:00, August 2016, Safe Use and Disposal of Sharps

