

WHS2.5 Sharps Safety

Purpose

1. The purpose of this policy is to minimise the risk of harm and to create and maintain a safe environment for staff and clients when handling sharps.

Alignment with Practice Standards

1. Standard 3: Personal care and clinical care
2. Standard 5: Organisation's service environment

Legislative Alignment

1. Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997
2. Protection of the Environment Operations (Waste) Regulation 2014 (Waste Regulation)
3. Work Health & Safety Act 2011
4. NSW Public Health Act

Key Responsible Executive

General Manager

For More Support

General Manager

Policy Statement

1. GM complies with all relevant legislation in maintaining practices that minimise the risk of harm when handling sharp devices.
2. Systems are in place to ensure prompt identification, notification and management of risks within the workplace.

Procedures

1. Work practice Controls
 - a. All employees must follow appropriate medication procedures, including GM's Medication Policy. If it is not safe to administer the medication, the employee is to stop and contact the office.
 - b. An employee should only administer medication via a single-use safety-engineered needle/syringe (i.e. injector pen).
 - c. An employee must not administer medication via a sharps device unless they have passed the appropriate competency training.

- d. Staff responsible for administering medication via a sharps device, and thereby at risk of needle stick injury, must adhere to standard practice precautions, wear personal protective equipment (PPE), and follow safe work processes.
 - e. The person using sharps is responsible for disposing of it in an approved sharps disposal container.
 - f. The Chief Executive Officer and Client Engagement Managers for each region must ensure that adequate, safe, and effective aids, including PPE, are available to prevent sharps injuries.
 - g. The Chief Executive Officer, and Client Engagement Managers for each region, ensures that a sharps disposal system that conforms to Australian Standards (AS4031 or AS/NZS 4261) is available for use in all situations where employees are required to administer medication via a sharps device.
 - h. GM reserves the right to withdraw or refuse services in situations where others may be exposed to risks.
2. Exposure to a needle stick injury
- a. Staff whose work involves the risk of needle stick injuries must follow standard precautions, wear personal protective equipment (PPE), and follow safe work processes.
 - b. All team members must complete an incident report via TurnPoint following a needle stick injury or near miss.
 - c. If an employee or volunteer sustains a needle stick injury, they must clean and decontaminate the skin by washing it with soap and water. Further information on steps to follow after an injury is available from the National Needlestick Hotline 1800 804 823.
 - d. Employees or volunteers who have been exposed to any of the above situations must inform their People Manager, or the Clinical Care Manager immediately. The exposed staff member or volunteer will be provided with immediate and free access to confidential testing and/or counselling. Alternatively, they may choose to notify their GP and seek preventative treatment and counselling.
 - e. The Executive Team will review the incident, ensuring that each investigation is thorough and includes an analysis of the systemic root cause.
3. Training
- a. Employees complete training on the safe use and disposal of sharps as part of their induction in the Medication Management module. Refresher training will then be conducted annually.
 - b. Sharps training will include but not be limited to:
 - i. Care in handling sharp devices;
 - ii. Use of personal protective equipment (PPE);
 - iii. Reporting, response and monitoring procedures for needle stick injuries.

References to other GM policies

- 1. CC13 - Medication Management
- 2. HR13 - Infection Control
- 3. HR16 - Hazardous Substances

Summary of attachments

- 1. Nil

Version Control

1. 1 April 2026 - New Policy Creation