

NEEDLESTICK & SHARPS SAFETY POLICY

Introduction

This code of practice describes the Company's arrangements to ensure the health and safety of employees likely to come into contact with needles and sharps. Work undertaken by many employees can result in contact with hypodermic needles/syringes and other similar instruments. These are commonly known as 'sharps'. The main risks from accidental puncture wounds are from HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C. The hepatitis viruses are more infectious than HIV. HIV, Hepatitis B and C are Blood Borne Viruses (BBV's) and are spread by sharps that have been contaminated by blood or bloodstained bodily fluids such as vomit or urine. Employees who clean or service areas that may be used by the general public could be at risk.

This code of practice deals with the risks from the careless or malicious disposal of needles/sharps that may be discovered by Shield employees in the course of their duties.

The risks associated with needlestick/sharps can be reduced by following the recommended guidance within this policy. Where there is a recognised risk, a safe system of work must be implemented and followed.

Senior Managers must be aware of and familiarise themselves with this policy and also ensure resources are available to allow their Managers and Supervisors to fulfil their obligations. Where identified by the risk assessment process, employees at risk must be familiar with this policy.

Risk Assessment

Managers and Supervisors must ensure that if employees are likely to be involved in handling or disposal of needlesticks/sharps in the course of their duties, it is identified in the generic risk assessment for the employee group. Risk assessment will assist in the establishment of safe systems of work and the identification of preventative and protective measures. The risk assessment should clearly identify the training needs of employees and provision of equipment to ensure safe handling and disposal of such items. A personal protective equipment (PPE) risk assessment must also be completed.

Needlestick/Sharps – People at risk

Needlestick/sharps have been found in a number of common areas as noted in the illustrative list below. The list also identifies the categories of people who may be at risk.

Examples of some areas/places/sources where there may be a Risk	Examples of some categories of people who may be at Risk
Public toilets (including waste bins) Refuse sacks, litter bins, waste collection hoppers	Cleaners, waste handlers, site supervisors, refuse & cleansing works, plumbers, toilet attendants, public
School playing areas, general playing fields	Ground keepers, site supervisors and others e.g. visitors
Parks – shrubs beds, flower beds, grassed areas, street furniture	Grounds maintenance workers.
Public playgrounds *	

Employees working in areas of significant risk of needlestick/sharps injury as identified by risk assessment should be vaccinated against Hepatitis B and have appropriate training/health education regarding the various health risks associated.

Safe Systems of Work

The following matters (not exhaustive) are advised as a guide as to the areas that should be considered when preparing a safe system of work:

- Employees must be aware (via tool box talks etc) of known risk areas prior to commencing work.
- Employees working in at risk areas must be alert to foreign objects in the work area before carrying out work activities.
- Under no circumstances should an employee put their unprotected hands where they cannot see, such as into soil, drains, u bends, inside bins, dense bushes etc.
- Where a task involves kneeling, consideration should be given to additional protection.

Preventive and Protective Measures

In areas where the risk assessments has identified a risk, pick up kits and associated methods must be used wherever possible along the PPE. Employees must not attempt to push down the contents of the box and the box must not be overfilled.

Otherwise, where the risk assessment process has not identified a risk and a pick up kit has not been provided.

- 'Remote' methods must always be used in the first instance.
- **EMPLOYEES MUST NOT TOUCH A DISCARDED NEEDLE WITH THEIR BARE HANDS.**
- The sharp item must be placed in a closed container or jar, using tongs, forceps, brush and shovel, anti-syringe gloves, PPE, until it can be collected.
- The container must be clearly labelled to ensure people are aware of its contents.
- If a sharp is found, and where possible, ensure that it is effectively guarded until it can be safely removed using the above techniques.

Action to take in the Event of a Needlestick/Sharp Injury

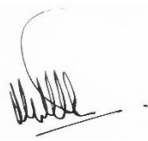
Employees must be familiar with the immediate action to take in the event of a needlestick/sharp injury and the reporting procedure around it. A needlestick/sharp injury must be reported by telephone to Head Offices in order for them to determine whether it is reportable to the Health & Safety Executive under RIDDOR.

For the purpose of this policy, a definition of a needlestick/sharp injury is one where the skin is punctured by a sharp object which may be contaminated by blood or body fluids.

Needlestick/sharps injuries are skin punctures caused by hypodermic needles, or lacerations caused by other sharps. In the event of such an injury, the following action must be taken without delay :

- 1) Stop work immediately
- 2) **DO NOT SUCK THE WOUND**
- 3) Apply pressure to the wound encouraging it to bleed – this will minimise the risk of foreign material entering the bloodstream
- 4) Wash the affected areas with cold running water and cover with a waterproof dressing – **do not scrub the skin**
- 5) Inform Line Manager/Supervisor immediately
- 6) Medical attention must be sought as soon as possible and if able to do so the employee should attend the Accident & Emergency Department for immediate attention

Signed:



Date: 1st May 2023

Malcolm Rose, Chief Executive Officer - On behalf of Shield Service Group Ltd