## NEEDLE STICK INJURY POLICY AND PROCEDURE

<Organization Name> is committed to ensuring the health and safety of our employees, specifically with regards to any hazards they may come across during the course of their job duties. As needles are instruments used by our employees, this policy has been developed to outline the hazards of using them and how employees can mitigate these risks and avoid workplace injuries. Needle stick injuries pose a risk in the area of the transmission of serious infectious diseases such as HIV, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C.

In order to maintain a safe and healthy workplace, <Organization Name> has established this policy to outline the general necessary safety measures to prevent and manage needle stick injuries. This policy is in accordance with the [*Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Code and Act*](https://kings-printer.alberta.ca/documents/OHS/OHSCode_December_2021.pdf) and outlines the responsibilities and procedures to be followed in the event of a needle stick injury.

SCOPE

The provisions of this policy shall extend to all pharmacy personnel, including pharmacy managers, pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, and support staff, who could be at risk of a needlestick injury. This policy encompasses all processes related to the handling and disposal of needles and sharps, as well as reporting in the event of a needle stick injury.

DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this policy, the following terms are defined:

“Needlestick injuries” are wounds caused by needles that accidentally puncture the skin (Source: [CCOHS](https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/diseases/needlestick_injuries.html))

“Sharps” means needles, knives, scalpels, blades, scissors and other items that can cut or puncture a person, which may also be contaminated with a biohazardous material (Source: Alberta OHS Act)

POLICY

Needle stick injuries can occur during the use, disassembly, or disposal of needles and can result from improper disposal, such as when needles are left in linen or garbage and cause harm to individuals. All employees are therefore expected to adhere to the guidelines below for handling needles and other sharps properly.

**Preventing Needlestick Injuries**

The occurrence of needlestick injuries is often associated with practices such as recapping needles, the improper disposal of used needles, attempting multiple tasks during disassembly or disposal, and working in challenging patient care scenarios with limited lighting.

To reduce the risk of injury, personnel should strictly adhere to the following guidelines:

* Refrain from recapping or resheathing needles.
* Minimize handling of sharps.
* Keep sharps containers within immediate reach.
* Refrain from recapping needles and syringes, even if needles are replaced.
* Promptly dispose of sharps after use in designated containers.
* Seal and dispose of containers when three-quarters full.
* Plan for safe handling and disposal of sharps prior to starting procedures.
* [More measures may be added as deemed necessary.]

Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

In the pharmacy setting, the use of PPE is of utmost importance in reducing the risk of needle stick injury. This may include:

* gloves
* gowns
* eye protection
* [More items may be added as deemed necessary.]

Pharmacy personnel must wear appropriate PPE whenever handling sharps or in any potential situational exposure to blood or other bodily fluids.

Safe Handling and Disposal of Needles and Sharps

To prevent needle stick injuries, it is imperative to handle needles and sharps safely and dispose of them appropriately. Pharmacy personnel must adhere to the following guidelines while handling needles:

* Utilize needle safety devices at all times;
* Only use needles once;
* Refrain from recapping needles; if recapping is necessary, employ the one-handed needle recapping technique;
* Discard used needles and attached syringes immediately into puncture-resistant containers for disposal;
* Seal and dispose of sharps containers when they are no more than three-quarters full;
* Not administering medications from the same syringe to another patient, even if the needle has been changed in-between patients;
* Once a needle has been used, it cannot be used for any other purpose and must be disposed of;
* Employees may not enter a vial, bag, or bottle with a syringe that has been previously-used; and
* Ensure that sealed sharps containers are disposed of in designated receptacles.

The sharps containers:

* Must be able to close (not over-filled),
* Must be leak-proof,
* Are puncture-resistant, and
* Are located in accessible locations close to treatment areas.

In the event that an employee notices a defect with a sharps container, the employee is responsible for notifying their supervisor or health and safety representative as soon as possible.

**Hazards of Needlestick Injuries**

* The transmission of infectious diseases, including blood-borne viruses
* The injection of hazardous fluids into the body
* Cuts to the skin

**Managing Exposure Incidents**

In the event of exposure to a needle stick injury, the following actions must be taken:

1. Administer basic first aid to the affected area;
	1. Allow the wound to bleed freely, “milking” the wound if possible; thoroughly wash the affected area with soap and water;
	2. If exposure occurs on the skin or mucous membranes, rinse immediately and thoroughly with water or a saline solution;
2. Report the incident to the manager or supervisor immediately;
3. Seek evaluation at a hospital or emergency health care facility within two hours of the incident's occurrence.

**Responsibilities**

Management

* Ensuring that the policy is implemented and followed by all pharmacy staff
* Providing training and education on needle stick injury prevention and management
* Ensuring that appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) is available and used by all pharmacy staff
* Monitoring and reviewing the policy regularly to ensure its effectiveness

Employees

* Following the policy and procedures for preventing and managing needle stick injuries
* Reporting all needle stick injuries to management
* Participating in training and education on needle stick injury prevention and management

**Training and Awareness on Needle Stick Injury Prevention**

<Organization Name> is committed to ensuring the safety of its personnel and will regularly conduct training sessions aimed at educating all personnel on the appropriate handling and disposal of needles and sharps, as well as strategies to minimize the risk of needle stick injury.

<Organization Name> is committed to maintaining a safe work environment and continuously improving its policies and procedures for handling sharps. The company will regularly review and update these policies, assess the work environment and workflow, and implement necessary changes.

Any questions regarding this policy should be directed to [Insert the name and title of contact person].