



Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board

Section: Human Resources

**Pr H: 06A Procedure for the Disposal of Sharps**

PROCEDURE:	Pr H:06A
EFFECTIVE:	April 1, 2008
AMENDED:	
RELATED POLICIES:	H: 06
REPEALS:	
REVIEW DATE:	2011-2012

## 1.0 Objective

To reduce the risk of infection or injury by ensuring the safe disposal of sharps.

## 2.0 Definitions

2.1 Sharps are sharp objects used for medical purposes, including:

- Needles
- Syringes with needles attached
- Lancets
- Razor blades
- Other items that could cause a puncture, cut or abrasion

## 3.0 Sharps Containers

3.1 Each school shall have on site at least one container manufactured for the purpose of disposal of sharps. The container must be clearly labeled “sharps” and “hazardous materials”. Containers can be purchased through retailers of medical supplies or a local pharmacy.

3.2 All staff and those students who may administer their own needles should be informed of each container’s location and use.

## 4.0 Safe Handling and Disposal of Sharps

4.1 It is not safe to carry an uncapped, used needle. Most injuries related to sharps occur when attempting to replace the cap on a used needle. Therefore, after use, needles should not be recapped, but should be discarded immediately into the sharps container.

4.2 Used needles should be left attached to syringes to avoid injury.

4.3 All sharps must be handled with a great deal of care to prevent cuts.

4.4 The Principal shall ensure that disposable puncture resistant gloves and tongs are available to handle and dispose of sharps safely.

- 4.5 When disposing of a needle:
- a. Treat all needles as being potentially contaminated
  - b. Wear puncture resistant gloves and use tongs if possible.
  - c. Take the sharps container to the needle (not the needle to the sharps container). Place the container for sharps disposal on a flat surface as close as possible to the needle, and remove the container lid.
  - d. Pick up the needle by the blunt end e.g. the plastic fitting where it is fixed into the syringe.
  - e. If there is more than one needle, pick them up one at a time.
  - f. Holding the needle sharp tip down and away from your body, put the needle in the container for sharps disposal.
  - g. Close the container securely.
  - h. Return the container to its designated location.
  - i. Disposable gloves should be removed inside out and disposed of in the regular garbage.
  - j. Wash hands with soap and water.
- 4.6 If a needle is found, the area must be marked and all children and employees kept away from the area until the needle can be disposed according to the prescribed process.
- 4.7 On a daily basis the Principal or designate shall ensure that the sharps disposal container is:
- Not punctured
  - Not filled above the “full” line
  - Not leaking
  - Not stored near food supplies
  - Not stored where children can reach it
- 4.8 Once the sharps container is full, or when deemed necessary, the lid shall be securely closed and the container shall be disposed of by taking it to a hospital or pharmacy that disposes of the used containers. A list of pharmacies providing such service can be found on the City of Windsor website at [www.city.windsor.ca](http://www.city.windsor.ca), or the Principal or designate may inquire whether the service is provided at a local hospital or pharmacy. The container must be replaced with a new container that must be purchased by the school in accordance with section 3.1 above.
- 4.9 Any employee who receives an injury from a sharp must inform their principal as required by Board Policy H: 10 Employee Injuries. If an employee punctures or cuts himself/herself with a used sharp, they should treat the wound using first aid measures and seek medical attention.

## **5.0 Reference**

Safe Handling & Disposal of Sharps & Medical Supplies in Home Health Settings, Fast Facts, Published by Health Care & Safety Association of Ontario, [www.hchsa.on.ca](http://www.hchsa.on.ca)