

Handling and Disposal of Laboratory Sharps

The Biological Safety Section, Division of Research Safety, administers the UIUC Sharps Disposal Program. The program provides the following services:

- Delivery of appropriate sharps disposal containers directly to laboratories by Campus Stores.
- Pick-up of full sharps disposal containers by the Biological Safety Section.
- Proper treatment and disposal of sharps in accordance with Illinois and federal laws and regulations.

Sharps are items that should be handled cautiously due to the potential hazards involved. To determine if an item is considered a "sharp", refer to the box at the bottom of this page.

How do I handle sharps?

First, obtain an approved sharps disposal container from Campus Stores. These containers are closable, puncture resistant, leak-proof on the sides and bottoms, and available in 1-quart, 2-gallon, and 8-gallon sizes. Sharps disposal containers must be easily accessible to laboratory personnel and located as close as feasible to the area where sharps are used. When discarding sharps:

- Never bend, shear, break, or recap disposable needles or remove from disposable syringes.
- Immediately following use, place the item into the sharps disposal container.
- Never reach into the sharps disposal container.
- Never empty the contents of the sharps disposal container into another container.
- Never remove the lid from the container.
- Never overfill a sharps disposal container; no materials should be sticking out the top.
- Never force materials into a sharps disposal container.

How do I obtain a delivery of sharps disposal containers?

Approved sharps disposal containers are available from Campus Stores at no charge to the laboratory or department. Call 244-0139 or e-mail your request to cstores@illinois.edu. You can also use a sharps request form available from Campus Stores and Receiving and mail it to 1609 S. Oak, Champaign, MC-662 or fax it to 244-1790. The containers will generally be delivered within two working days of the request.

Are you unsure what size of sharps containers to request? Please use the graphic provided at <http://www.drs.illinois.edu/bss/factsheets/sharpscontainer.html> to determine what size sharps container to request.

How do I obtain a pick-up for full sharps disposal containers?

When a sharps disposal container is full, go to the DRS web site <http://www.drs.illinois.edu/sharps/> and complete the online Sharps Collection Request form. The container will generally be picked up within three working days of the request.

What should I do with material that won't fit into the sharps disposal container?

Oversized items for disposal, such as a 20-liter flask contaminated with an infectious agent, may be carefully boxed for collection using an ordinary cardboard box. The box must be sturdy and no larger than 18" x 12" x 9". Bottom seams on the box should be taped, and the bottom lined with absorbent laboratory bench paper. Items should be emptied of all liquids before being packaged. The box lid should be closed and seams secured with tape. The box should be labeled on two sides with the words "OVERSIZED SHARPS" before calling for pick-up. Materials will not be collected if they are not packaged as described above.

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ALWAYS dispose of these items in sharps disposal containers:

- Any medical needles
- Syringe barrels (with or without needle)
- Pasteur pipettes
- Scalpel and razor blades
- Blood vials
- Microscope slides and cover slips
- Glassware contaminated with infectious agents

Still not sure? Call 333-2755 for help concerning the proper handling of any items contaminated with infectious agents.

NEVER dispose of these items in sharps disposal containers:

- Plastic items (except for syringes)
- Beverage containers (no pop cans!)
- Non-biologically contaminated laboratory glassware*
- Solvent/Chemical bottles
- Light bulbs
- Any paper materials
- Pipette tips
- Plastic pipettes
- Aerosol cans or can of any type
- Scintillation vial
- Any item with liquid (except for blood in vacutainers)

Still not sure? Call 333-2755 for help concerning the proper handling of any items contaminated with infectious agents.

* Instructions for disposal of non-biologically contaminated laboratory glassware can be found in Chapter 6 of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Chemical Waste Management Guide, www.drs.illinois.edu/css/guidesplans/wasteguide.

Questions?

Contact the Division of Research Safety, Biological Safety Section (333-2755 or [via e-mail at bss@illinois.edu](mailto:bss@illinois.edu)) or visit our web site: <http://www.drs.illinois.edu/bss/>.

Other Biosafety Facts Sheets are available from the Biological Safety Section at our web site: <http://www.drs.illinois.edu/bss/factsheets/>.

