

# Occupational Health GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF SYRINGES



## Purpose

To propose guidelines to **avoid the recapping of needles**, and techniques to follow if recapping is necessary.



## Summary

Recapping needles puts personnel at risk for an accidental needle stick. This practice should be avoided when it is reasonable to do so. Plan the use of needles and syringes carefully. Advanced planning is very important and will help reduce hazards and risks.



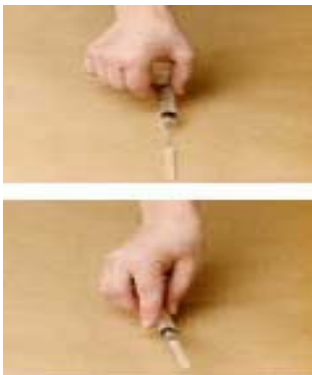
# Guidelines

- 1) Place a syringe and needle in an appropriate sharps container **IMMEDIATELY** after use without recapping when it is reasonable to do so. **THIS SHOULD ALWAYS BE THE FIRST CHOICE!**



- 2) Have a **SHARPS CONTAINER** at the point of use.
- 3) Draw up the solution to be injected close to the time and place of its administration and know how the items will be disposed of.
- 4) Never remove a protective cap with your mouth, and NEVER replace a protective cap with your mouth.
- 5) Never refill a disposable syringe.
- 6) Do not hand-pass exposed needles/syringes/sharps from one person to another. Use a predetermined neutral zone or tray for placing and retrieving. Verbally announce when sharps are being placed in the neutral zone.
- 7) When materials are drawn up into a syringe with one needle (e.g. 18 gauge) and the administration will be with a different needle (e.g. 27 gauge), consider using a needle screw-on-type of syringe. This is also referred to as a luer-lok. This device will reduce the difficulty of removing and attaching needles to the syringe barrel.
- 8) Unused syringes and needles should be stored in clean cabinets or drawers. They should not be stored out in the open (such as on counter tops). When syringes are found in the open and their package seal has not been broken, they should be placed in their proper location.
- 9) If you find used/exposed needles and/or syringes, carefully place them in a sharps container. Use a mechanical device, such as a forceps or clamp, to assist with disposal if necessary.

- 10) Avoid recapping or manually removing the needle when you are finished drawing blood using vacutainer tubes. If a quick release model is not available or malfunctions, use a mechanical device (often available on the sharps container) to remove the needle from the plastic piece that holds the vacutainer tube.
- 11) Recapping needles after contact with animals should be extremely rare, but there may be some exceptions:
- a. Working with larger animals, uncooperative animals, combative animals, or minimally restrained animals may necessitate the need for recapping.
  - b. Working in agricultural settings may necessitate the need for recapping, as it may be impractical to have a sharps container readily available.
  - c. It is appropriate to recap syringe needles using the one-handed technique when there will be a delay in use or a need to transport the syringe before or after administration.
- 12) If recapping is necessary based on specific circumstances, a **one-handed technique** should be used.
- a. Insert the syringe needle tip deep into the plastic protective cap on a flat surface.
  - b. Press the tip of the plastic cap against an inanimate object in order to secure it in place.
  - c. Never use two hands to begin the needle recapping process.
  - d. Minimize the distance or length of time one walks around with syringes and needles, whether filled for injection or empty.
  - e. Avoid carrying syringes around in your hand or pocket. Place them in a secondary hard plastic container for transport.



Thank you to the RARC for their valuable contributions to this material.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact  
Tom Kenney RN, Occupational Health Officer at 263-2177

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