

<b>Personnel and Employee Relations</b> <b>7303</b> <hr/> <b>Safe Collection and Disposal of Discarded Needles/Syringes</b>	<b>Administrative Application</b>	
	<b>Last Reviewed /Approved on:</b>	October 1, 2019
	<b>References:</b>	Occupational Health & Safety Act, 1993 Workers' Compensation Act, 2013; Administrative Applications 7570.1,2,3. Administrative Application 7300.1 Policy 12 – Role of the Director
	<b>Status:</b>	Operational

### Preamble

This application sets down guidance on the handling and disposal of discarded needles and/or syringes that may pose a threat to staff, students and/or the general public. It is written to protect staff, students and the general public from discarded needles and/or syringes found on school property.

Occupational Health and Safety, 1996

**O-1.1 REG 1**

### PART III General Duties

#### General duties of employers

**12** *The duties of an employer at a place of employment include:*

- (a) *the provision and maintenance of plant, systems of work and working environments that ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of the employer's workers;*
- (b) *arrangements for the use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances in a manner that protects the health and safety of workers;*
- (c) *the provision of any information, instruction, training and supervision that is necessary to protect the health and safety of workers at work; and*
- (d) *the provision and maintenance of a safe means of entrance to and exit from the place of employment and all worksites and work-related areas in or on the place of employment.*

4 Oct 96 c0-1.1 Reg 1 s12.

PART III  
**Occupational Health Committees and Occupational Health  
and Safety Representatives**

**Duties of committees**

**19** *The duties of an occupational health committee are:*

- (a) to participate in the identification and control of health and safety hazards in or at the place of employment;*
- (b) to co-operate with the occupational health and safety service, if any, established for the place of employment;*
- (c) to establish, promote and recommend the means of delivery of health and safety programs for the education and information of workers;*
- (d) to maintain records with respect to the duties of the committee pursuant to this section;*
- (e) to investigate any matter mentioned in section 23;*
- (f) to receive, consider and resolve matters respecting the health and safety of workers;*
- (g) to carry out any other duties that are specified in this Act or prescribed in the regulations.*

1993, c.O-1.1, s.19.

The Occupational Health and Safety Co-chairs and/or a member or member(s) of the Occupational Health & Safety Committees will be requested to handle and dispose of this type of waste. Appropriate training, information and instruction on the safe handling and disposal of biological substances as defined in the Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations will be provided.

**The Risks**

The main risks are from Hepatitis B and C and HIV viruses. The hepatitis viruses are more infectious than HIV. The level of risk of infection will be dependent upon:

- Whether the needle was used by a person infected with either hepatitis or HIV viruses
- How much material enters the bloodstream – a needle attached to a syringe containing blood is likely to present a higher risk than a detached needle
- The length of time since the needle was discarded – both Hepatitis B and HIV can survive for weeks or months if not dried out
- In the case of Hepatitis B, whether or not the injured person is immune.

Hepatitis B vaccinations are available (refer to Administrative Application 7302 – Hepatitis B Vaccine) for those committee members assigned to handle the disposal of this waste. There are currently no vaccinations available to prevent Hepatitis C or HIV.

Staff may suffer anxiety from a needle stick injury.

Confidential counselling is accessible through the *Regina Catholic Schools Employee and Family Assistance Programs*.

## Application

### 1. Prevent the exposure wherever reasonably practicable

- a. Employees required to dispose of discarded needles check the school playgrounds at least 3 times per year; twice in the spring as snow is melting (or more if necessary) and once prior to school resuming in the fall.
- b. Sharps containers will be used for syringes and/or needles; litter pickers and/or tongs, sturdy gloves and appropriate footwear (heel and toe in shoe) are required when collecting litter from playgrounds; suitable hand protection must be worn when unblocking toilets.
- c. Prior to the melting of snow (spring) and at the commencement of each school year (fall), the Administrator will remind staff and students of the procedures to follow should they come across a discarded syringe or needle on school property.

### 2. Control the risk in all other circumstances

- a. Staff required to dispose of discarded needles must be trained in a safe system of work and provided with suitable personal protective equipment (stout rubber gloves, a sharps collection box, disposable tongs).

If a needle stick incident should occur, the following actions should be followed:

- i. Encourage the wound to bleed, but do not suck the wound
- ii. Hold the wound under clean cold running water without soap
- iii. Cover the wound with a clean dry dressing if possible
- iv. Notify your Supervisor
- v. Seek Medical attention: (If known to be Hepatitis B immune go to medical clinic for blood work and tetanus; If not known to be Hepatitis B immune go to emergency department – for blood work, Hepatitis B vaccination and tetanus – **NB: A protective injection against Hepatitis B can be given but this must be done within 48 hours after injury**).
- vi. Complete an incident report and a *Workers Compensation Workers' Report of Injury (WCB – W1 form)*. These reports are available at each school or by contacting the Human Resource Services Administrator.
- vii. Teachers not covered by Workers Compensation may complete a school based incident report form.

### 3. Procedure for disposing and discarding of syringes and/or needles

- a. The OH&S Co-chairs (Administrator & Head Caretaker) will inform all staff and students that when they come across a syringe/needle they are not to attempt to pick up the needle/syringe by hand. They are to notify either the Administrator or Caretaker.
- b. The Administrator or Caretaker/other member of the OH&S Committee who has had training will use the protective equipment provided (gloves, sharps container and litter handling tongs) to contain the waste.
- c. Always take the sharps container, gloves and tongs to the discarded sharp. **DO NOT TAKE THE NEEDLE OR OTHER SHARP TO THE CONTAINER.**
- d. Open the sharps box, place on the ground, put gloves on and pick up the needle/syringe with the tongs provided.
- e. Place the needle/syringe inside the sharps box (needle facing downwards).
- f. Close the sharps box, ensuring the lid is locked into position.
- g. Once the needle/syringe has been safely deposited in the sharps container and it is approximately 2/3 full, you can call Population and Public Health -The Street Project at **766-7799** and they will come as soon as they can to pick up the sharps container or the containers can be dropped off at: 2110 Hamilton Street, main floor, STD clinic, along with a completed Population and Public Health Statistics form. (See attached). **Do not call the Fire Department; it is not their responsibility.**
- h. Forward a copy of the Population and Public Health Statistics Form (**attached**) with recorded number of sharps found, date(s) and location(s), by fax to 791-1709 to the Human Resource Services Administrator for record keeping.

It is the responsibility of the Administrator to ensure that their staff is aware of the hazards regarding this issue, that the proper personnel are picking up and disposing of needles/syringes according to this application and that in the event of an injury the appropriate emergency measures are taken and the reporting procedures are followed. Where a staff member requires counselling as a result of an injury of this type, the Administration will also ensure the employee is offered this counselling.



## Why should you worry about used needles?

- Each year the receives reports about children or adults finding used needles on playgrounds or other places in the community. In some cases, a child or adult has been injured by the needle.
- The needles have fallen out of garbage during disposal or have been discarded after use.

## Are used needles dangerous?

- Yes. When a needle has been used, there is often blood left inside. The blood can contain bacteria and viruses. Some of these can cause dangerous diseases like AIDS and Hepatitis. If a child or adult is poked by the needle, he or she can become infected with the disease.

## What should you do if you poke yourself with a needle?

Wash the area with soap and warm water. See a doctor immediately at the closest hospital emergency department.

## How can an adult safely get rid of a used needle?

- Get an empty non breakable hard-sided container that needles can't poke through. The container must have a lid. You can use an empty pop bottle or a small coffee tin.
- Put the container on a flat surface.
- Pick the syringe up by the barrel end using pliers or tongs and keep the pointed needle end away from you.
- **DO NOT** try to put the cap back on the needle. Many injuries happen this way.
- Put the needle in the container. Put the lid on tightly and tape the lid on. Wash your hands.
- Place the container in a safe place where it won't be opened by children.
- Take the container to the nearest needle disposal drop box (locations on reverse side of sheet) or Call The Street Project at (306)766-7799 to arrange for someone to pick it up within a few days

## Needle Drop Boxes

- Individuals can dispose of single needles or needles in small containers in the needle drop boxes. Large containers will not fit into the drop boxes. If an individual requires assistance with disposing of large quantities of needles, please call The Street Project at (306)766-7799

## Needle Drop Box Locations in Regina

1. **North Central:** Alley between 1100 Block Cameron and Garnet Street ( off of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue)
2. **Downtown Core:** Alley by Core Community Park- 1800 Block Montreal Street
3. **Downtown Core:** 1925 Osler Street