

HEALTHCARE SHARPS SAFETY TEMPLATE

Sharps Disposal Checklist

Inspect needles, scalpels, lancets and other sharps from point of use through immediate disposal, container replacement, collection, storage, exposure response and corrective action.

FACILITY / LOCATION

AUDIT DATE

AUDITOR

APPROVER

Adapt container specifications, labels, fill limits, injury-response pathways, collection routes, and final-disposal controls to current facility policy and applicable local requirements.

1. Audit setup, sharps policy, and responsibilities

1

Confirm the facility, audit date, operating status, auditor, sharps-safety owner, infection-prevention contact, occupational-health contact, department owners, and escalation contacts.

Compliant

Needs attention

Critical gap

N/A

◇ Execution tip: Identify who can immediately remove an unsafe disposal point from service and authorize urgent corrective action.

METADATA + SIGN-OFF

2

Define the wards, clinics, theatres, laboratories, pharmacies, treatment rooms, mobile-care areas, and other sharps-generating activities included in the inspection.

Compliant

Needs attention

Critical gap

N/A

◇ Execution tip: Include high-volume and high-risk areas, night shifts, procedure rooms, and mobile or temporary care locations.

SCOPE CHECKLIST

3

Verify a current sharps-safety procedure covers device selection, safe handling, point-of-use disposal, container standards, collection, exposure response, and escalation.

Compliant

Needs attention

Critical gap

N/A

◇ Execution tip: Check version, approval date, staff access, and alignment with current facility and local requirements.

CRITICAL

CRITICAL POLICY VERIFICATION

4

Review recent needlestick or sharps injuries, near misses, recapping events, overfilled containers, missing containers, supply shortages, and overdue corrective actions.

Compliant

Needs attention

Critical gap

N/A

◇ Execution tip: Use repeat events to target devices, procedures, departments, shifts, and disposal points with the highest risk.

PREVIOUS FINDINGS REVIEW

5

Confirm the facility defines which needles, syringes with attached needles, scalpels, lancets, broken glass, and other sharp items require an approved sharps-disposal route.

Compliant

Needs attention

Critical gap

N/A

◇ Execution tip: Do not rely on contamination status alone; both contaminated and uncontaminated sharps can cause injury.

CRITICAL

CRITICAL SHARPS CLASSIFICATION

6

Capture the audit start time, unit or location, shift context, and approved reference evidence without exposing unnecessary patient-identifying information.

Compliant

Needs attention

Critical gap

N/A

◇ Execution tip: Record the exact disposal point and care area before collecting photos or other evidence.

CRITICAL

CRITICAL TIMESTAMP + EVIDENCE

Taqtics | Digitize sharps disposal, point-of-use evidence, exposure response, actions, and approvals.

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2. Point-of-use container availability, placement, and condition

7 Verify an approved sharps container is available wherever sharps are prepared, used, or discarded, including bedside, procedure, laboratory, pharmacy, and mobile-care locations. CRITICAL CRITICAL POINT-OF-USE AVAILABILITY

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: A worker should not need to carry an exposed sharp across a room or corridor to reach disposal.

8 Confirm each container is puncture-resistant, leak-resistant on the sides and bottom, closable, and clearly identified according to the facility's approved system. CRITICAL CRITICAL CONTAINER SPECIFICATION

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Check the actual container in use, not only the product specification or purchasing record.

9 Check the container is positioned as close as practical to the point of use, clearly visible, unobstructed, and not placed on the floor or behind equipment. CRITICAL CRITICAL CONTAINER PLACEMENT

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Observe the normal work position and confirm disposal can occur immediately without unnecessary movement.

10 Verify mounted or freestanding containers are stable, upright, secure against tipping, and positioned at a safe height with the opening easy to see and reach. CONTAINER STABILITY + HEIGHT

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Avoid placements that require staff to reach above eye level, bend awkwardly, or cross another person's work zone.

11 Confirm the container opening and size are compatible with the sharps used in the area so items can enter without forcing, pushing, or manipulating the device. CONTAINER FIT CHECK

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Sample the largest or most awkward disposable sharp used in the area when assessing opening size.

12 Verify replacement containers are readily available and the replenishment process prevents any gap when a container is closed, damaged, or reaches its fill limit. REPLACEMENT STOCK READINESS

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Check local stock at the point of care as well as central inventory and after-hours access.

3. Immediate disposal and safe handling after use

- 13** Observe that used needles, syringes with attached needles, scalpels, lancets, and other disposable sharps are placed immediately into the approved sharps container after use. CRITICAL CRITICAL IMMEDIATE DISPOSAL

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Observe a live or simulated workflow from procedure completion through final disposal.

- 14** Confirm staff do not routinely recap, bend, break, shear, or remove used needles by hand before disposal. CRITICAL CRITICAL NO-RECAP / NO-BEND

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Any recurring workaround should trigger review of device design, container placement, or procedure setup.

- 15** Where recapping or needle removal is clinically unavoidable, verify an approved one-handed technique or mechanical device is used according to the facility procedure. CRITICAL CRITICAL EXCEPTION CONTROL

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Confirm the exception is defined, justified, and supported by the correct equipment rather than informal practice.

- 16** Verify safety-engineered features are activated immediately after use when the device provides a safety mechanism, and activation is confirmed before disposal. CRITICAL CRITICAL SAFETY FEATURE ACTIVATION

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Listen or look for the device-specific confirmation of activation and sample staff technique.

- 17** Check used sharps are not left loose on beds, trays, trolleys, counters, linen, waste bags, instrument tables, or other temporary surfaces awaiting later disposal. CRITICAL CRITICAL LOOSE-SHARPS CONTROL

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Inspect procedure turnaround and cleaning periods when forgotten sharps are most likely to be found.

- 18** Confirm reusable sharps are transferred for reprocessing in a rigid, puncture-resistant, clearly identified container or tray that prevents hand contact with sharp points or edges. REUSABLE SHARPS TRANSFER

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Observe how the receiving reprocessing team opens and unloads the container as well as how the source unit packs it.

4. Safety-engineered devices and high-risk procedure practices

- 19 Verify approved safety-engineered needles, lancets, blood-collection devices, IV devices, and other safer sharps are available for procedures where they are required or adopted by facility policy.

SAFER-DEVICE AVAILABILITY

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Compare products actually stocked at the point of care with the facility's approved device list.

- 20 Observe staff using safety-engineered devices correctly, including activation timing, hand position, and disposal without bypassing or defeating the safety feature.

CRITICAL

CRITICAL SAFER-DEVICE USE

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Incorrect activation can leave a protected device functioning like a conventional exposed sharp.

- 21 Confirm device selection is appropriate for the procedure and that unplanned substitutions or stock-outs are assessed for increased sharps-injury risk.

DEVICE SELECTION CONTROL

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Review recent substitutions, emergency stock, and departments that frequently borrow devices from other areas.

- 22 Verify needles and other sharp components are not left exposed, carried openly, or detached from compatible systems longer than necessary during or after a procedure.

CRITICAL

CRITICAL EXPOSED-SHARP CONTROL

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Observe transitions between use, specimen transfer, line management, and final disposal.

- 23 Where appropriate for procedures involving scalpels, suture needles, or other sharps, confirm a neutral zone or no-hands technique is used to reduce hand-to-hand passing risk.

NO-HANDS / NEUTRAL-ZONE PRACTICE

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Review operating, emergency, dental, and procedure areas where multiple team members handle the same sharp.

- 24 Confirm the disposal location is identified and prepared before the procedure begins, including during emergency, bedside, mobile, or high-volume activities.

PRE-PROCEDURE DISPOSAL PLAN

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: A missing disposal plan often leads to temporary placement, recapping, or carrying an exposed sharp.

5. Fill limits, closure, replacement, and container removal

- 25** Check sampled sharps containers remain below the marked fill line or facility-approved replacement threshold and are replaced before overfilling occurs. **CRITICAL** CRITICAL FILL-LIMIT CHECK

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Inspect high-volume areas near shift change and after busy procedure periods rather than only newly replaced containers.

- 26** Verify no needles, blades, or other sharps protrude from the opening, lid, or sides of the container. **CRITICAL** CRITICAL PROTRUDING-SHARPS CHECK

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Treat any protruding sharp as an immediate exposure hazard and restrict the container until safely managed.

- 27** Confirm damaged, leaking, unstable, or overfilled containers are immediately removed from routine use and managed using the facility's approved containment procedure. **CRITICAL** CRITICAL DAMAGED-CONTAINER RESPONSE

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Do not ask staff to press contents down or force the lid onto an unsafe container.

- 28** Verify the container is closed, locked, capped, or otherwise secured according to its design before removal from the point of use. **CRITICAL** CRITICAL FINAL CLOSURE

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Check that closure is complete and cannot reopen during collection or transport.

- 29** Confirm staff never reach into a sharps container, manually push contents down, shake it to create space, or transfer sharps from one container into another. **CRITICAL** CRITICAL NO-MANUAL-COMPACTION

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Interview clinical, housekeeping, and waste staff because unsafe practices may occur during container replacement rather than patient care.

- 30** Where reusable sharps containers are used, verify the emptying, cleaning, decontamination, inspection, and return process prevents manual contact with sharps and follows the validated service method. REUSABLE CONTAINER PROCESS

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Review the service-provider or central-processing workflow, not only the container's condition on the ward.

6. Sharps segregation and special-hazard routes

- 31** Confirm needles, syringes with attached needles, scalpels, lancets, trocars, sharp wires, broken contaminated glass, and similar items enter the approved sharps stream rather than soft waste bags. CRITICAL CRITICAL SHARPS SEGREGATION

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Sample waste containers and procedure areas for misplaced sharps without manually sorting waste.

- 32** Check non-sharp items are not routinely placed into sharps containers when doing so causes premature filling, blocks the opening, or increases handling frequency. NON-SHARP CONTAMINATION CHECK

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Focus on gauze, wrappers, gloves, vials, and packaging that may be discarded into the nearest container out of convenience.

- 33** Verify cytotoxic, chemical, radioactive, or other special-hazard sharps follow the dedicated container and downstream route required by facility and local rules. CRITICAL CRITICAL SPECIAL-HAZARD SHARPS

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Do not assume the routine infectious-sharps stream is suitable for every hazardous drug, chemical, or radioactive item.

- 34** Confirm ampoules, glass medication containers, capillary tubes, and other breakable items are classified and discarded according to the facility's approved sharps or glass-waste procedure. GLASS / AMPOULE CONTROL

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Use the facility classification rather than relying on individual staff judgement at the point of disposal.

- 35** Verify broken glass or dropped sharps are picked up with tongs, forceps, a brush and pan, or another mechanical method rather than bare or gloved hands. CRITICAL CRITICAL DROPPED-SHARP RECOVERY

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Keep a suitable pickup tool accessible in areas where breakage or dropped sharps may occur.

- 36** Confirm laboratory, pathology, dental, operating-room, and other specialty sharps are placed in containers compatible with both the device and the approved downstream treatment process. SPECIALTY SHARPS ROUTE

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Check unusually long, heavy, contaminated, or chemically exposed sharps that may not fit a standard bedside container.

7. Collection, internal transport, storage, and treatment handoff

- 37** Verify closed sharps containers are removed by trained staff on the defined collection schedule or promptly when the fill limit, damage, or other replacement trigger is reached.

COLLECTION SCHEDULE CONTROL

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Compare actual pickup times with busy-area fill rates so containers do not remain overfilled while awaiting collection.

- 38** Confirm collection carts or trolleys keep sharps containers upright, secure, and protected from tipping or crushing, and can be cleaned when contamination occurs.

CRITICAL

CRITICAL TRANSPORT CART CONTROL

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Observe a collection round and inspect the cart after use rather than reviewing the procedure only.

- 39** Check closed sharps containers are never compacted, crushed, manually opened, or carried in a way that places staff hands near the disposal opening.

CRITICAL

CRITICAL TRANSPORT HANDLING

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Review loading into carts, storage cages, treatment equipment, and external-collection vehicles.

- 40** Verify temporary sharps-waste storage is secure, access-controlled, protected from patients, visitors, pests, weather, and unauthorized scavenging or tampering.

CRITICAL

CRITICAL SECURE STORAGE

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Confirm both normal and after-hours access controls and how damaged containers are isolated.

- 41** Confirm container labels, source identification, pickup records, manifests, or other traceability controls are complete where required by facility or local rules.

TRACEABILITY + HANDOFF RECORD

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Check that records allow the facility to investigate an incident or rejected load without exposing unnecessary patient information.

- 42** Verify the downstream treatment, transport, and final-disposal route for sharps is approved for the facility and consistent with current local regulatory and environmental requirements.

CRITICAL

CRITICAL APPROVED DISPOSAL ROUTE

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Avoid hard-coding one treatment method; verify the route actually authorized for the facility's jurisdiction and waste type.

8. Needlestick and sharps-injury exposure response

- 43** Confirm staff know the immediate first-aid steps, reporting route, responsible contact, and location of urgent medical evaluation after a needlestick or sharps exposure.

CRITICAL

CRITICAL EXPOSURE RESPONSE KNOWLEDGE

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Use a short scenario to test response during nights, weekends, and off-site or mobile care.

- 44** Verify needlestick and sharps injuries are reported promptly and are not delayed, hidden, or handled only informally within the department.

CRITICAL

CRITICAL INCIDENT REPORTING

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Compare staff interviews with occupational-health or safety records to identify under-reporting.

- 45** Confirm the exposure is assessed promptly for the type of injury, device, contamination, source circumstances, and recommended follow-up according to facility policy.

CRITICAL

CRITICAL EXPOSURE RISK ASSESSMENT

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: The audit should verify the pathway and timeliness, not make an individual clinical treatment decision.

- 46** Verify the post-exposure pathway includes access to indicated testing, hepatitis B status review, counseling, prophylaxis when applicable, and follow-up under the facility's clinical protocol.

CRITICAL

CRITICAL POST-EXPOSURE PATHWAY

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Check 24/7 access and referral arrangements where occupational-health services are not continuously on site.

- 47** Confirm incident records capture the device, procedure, location, task, injury mechanism, safety-feature status, container factors, and immediate actions while protecting confidentiality.

INCIDENT DATA QUALITY

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Good incident data should support prevention, not only administrative reporting.

- 48** Verify the area and device involved in an incident are made safe for investigation without creating a second exposure, and any defective equipment is quarantined when appropriate.

CRITICAL

CRITICAL SECONDARY-EXPOSURE CONTROL

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Do not retain an exposed sharp in an unsafe manner solely for investigation purposes.

9. Training, monitoring, supply readiness, and prevention improvement

- 49** Verify clinical, laboratory, pharmacy, housekeeping, waste-handling, and other exposed staff receive role-appropriate sharps-safety training and competency assessment.

TRAINING + COMPETENCY

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Include staff who may encounter discarded sharps even if they do not use needles themselves.

- 50** Confirm onboarding and refresher training covers point-of-use disposal, no routine recapping, safety-feature activation, fill limits, container replacement, spill or dropped-sharp response, and injury reporting.

CRITICAL

CRITICAL TRAINING CONTENT

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Compare the training record with observed practice to distinguish completion from competency.

- 51** Review direct-observation audits across representative departments, procedures, shifts, and container locations rather than relying only on self-reported compliance.

OBSERVATION SAMPLING

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Include night shift, emergency, procedure turnaround, and high-throughput areas where risk may differ from daytime rounds.

- 52** Verify container stock levels, safer-device supplies, wall brackets, carts, pickup tools, labels, and replacement response are monitored so shortages do not create unsafe workarounds.

SUPPLY READINESS

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Trace a recent stock-out or urgent request to see how quickly the system restored a safe disposal setup.

- 53** Analyze sharps injuries and near misses by device, procedure, department, location, shift, task, container factor, and safety-feature status to identify recurring prevention opportunities.

INJURY TREND ANALYSIS

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Look for clusters and mechanisms rather than relying only on the overall injury count.

- 54** Confirm frontline staff participate in reporting hazards and, where applicable, evaluating safer devices, container designs, placement, and workflow improvements.

STAFF PARTICIPATION

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Document usability problems that cause staff to bypass safety features or dispose of sharps incorrectly.

10. Findings, corrective actions, verification, and sign-off

- 55 Calculate the overall sharps-disposal compliance result and summarize critical disposal failures, unsafe handling, container gaps, injury trends, and affected departments or procedures.**

AUDIT SCORE + SUMMARY

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Separate immediate exposure hazards from underlying system causes such as placement, supply, workflow, device design, or training.

- 56 Create immediate containment for every exposed sharp, missing or overfilled container, protruding sharp, unsafe recapping practice, damaged container, or other critical disposal hazard.**

CRITICAL

CRITICAL CONTAINMENT ACTION

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Record what was stopped, isolated, replaced, secured, cleaned, or escalated before routine work continued.

- 57 Assign each finding an owner, priority, due date, root-cause requirement, corrective action, and objective closure-evidence rule.**

CRITICAL

CRITICAL CORRECTIVE ACTION ASSIGNMENT

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Use short deadlines for immediate exposure risk and realistic deadlines for permanent prevention.

- 58 Correct system causes such as poor container placement, unsuitable container size, safety-device design problems, stock shortages, collection delays, unclear procedures, or inadequate supervision.**

CRITICAL

SYSTEM CORRECTIVE ACTION

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Do not rely only on reminders when the work environment or equipment makes the unsafe choice easier.

- 59 Verify closure through repeat observation, safer-device or container changes, photos, stock evidence, training competency, incident review, or a focused re-audit.**

CRITICAL

CRITICAL CLOSURE VERIFICATION

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Do not close an action based only on a written comment from the assigned owner.

- 60 Record the final audit decision, remaining restrictions, next review date, auditor, sharps-safety or department lead approval, date, time, and signature.**

CRITICAL

CRITICAL APPROVAL + SIGNATURE

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Keep unsafe disposal points or devices restricted until all release conditions are met.

RUN THIS CHECKLIST DIGITALLY

Turn every sharps-disposal hazard into immediate containment and verified closure

Use Taqtics to schedule inspections by facility and department, capture point-of-use evidence, contain exposed-sharps risk, assign corrective actions, enforce deadlines, verify closure, and compare recurring injury and disposal trends across sites.

Point-of-use checks

Container evidence

Exposure response

Corrective actions

Sharps dashboards

Try the Sharps Disposal Checklist in Taqtics