

## Introduction

Sharps containers are red plastic containers that are used to store sharps. Sharps containers are required to have a lid and a label that contains the biohazard symbol.

Sharps containers are required in areas where sharps are generated.

## Definitions

**Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S)** – EWU department that works to protect the health and safety of employees. Office number 509-359-6496, email: [envhea@ewu.edu](mailto:envhea@ewu.edu), website: [inside.ewu.edu/ehs](http://inside.ewu.edu/ehs).

**EWU Exposure Control Plan** – document designed to reduce or eliminate employee exposure to bloodborne pathogens. This document was designed to comply with *WAC 296-823, Occupational Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens*.

**Sharps** – any item that has the ability to cut or puncture the skin.

## Use

After use, sharps should be immediately placed into a sharps container.

Sharps containers should remain open while being filled and be closed immediately when they are full. Open sharps containers should not be transported between rooms. If an open container must be moved, the sharps container should be placed into a ridged secondary container with a lid that will contain all sharps if the sharps container tips.

Sharps containers should not be overfilled. There is a fill line on the labels or containers, when sharps reach that line the sharps containers should be locked closed and a pickup should be requested.

Bloody items that do not pose a risk of cutting or puncturing the skin must be placed into a red biohazard container or bags and not a sharps container.

## Contamination

Sharps containers should not become contaminated with blood or bodily fluids during normal use. Procedures should be designed to prevent sharps container contamination.

Like all equipment, sharps containers that are exposed to blood or bodily fluids must be immediately decontaminated. Decontamination should follow the procedures developed by the department or found in the EWU Exposure Control Plan.

## Disposal

Contact EH&S for pickup of full sharps containers. Make sure that sharps containers are locked closed and are decontaminated before requesting pickup.

## Training

All personnel who use sharps must have training in their safe use and disposal. All personnel who have potential exposure to blood or bodily fluids must attend an annual Bloodborne Pathogen Training. Training can be provided by a knowledgeable person in the department or training can be provided by EH&S.

- All trainings must be documented with the name of the trainer, the names of the trainees, the date of training, and a brief description of the training provided. Training records must be maintained for a minimum of three years.