



IMPLEMENTING SHARPS SAFETY DEVICES

Occupational exposure to bloodborne pathogens from needlesticks and other sharps injuries result in approximately 600,000 injuries to hospital-based healthcare personnel in the USA each year¹ half of which go unreported.²

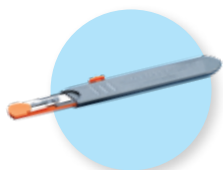
Improving safety with the Needlestick Safety and Prevention Act



The United States Needlestick Safety Act of 2000 was added to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Bloodborne Pathogen Standards.³ This act requires employers to evaluate, select, and use engineering controls (work practice controls designed to improve safety). Innovative safety-engineered devices are available to eliminate occupational risks and countries have mandated their use.

The annual appraisal of engineered safety devices with non-managerial employee feedback is also essential to preventing the occurrence and consequences of needlestick injuries.

Understanding how, why, when and where O.R. sharps injuries occur and being knowledgeable about prevention are key aspects of implementing safety devices. Adopt and incorporate safe habits into daily activities when preparing and using sharps devices. Products that assist in sharps injury prevention include:



Safety scalpels or disposable scalpels
Prevent the handling of a blade when passing



Counting, disarming and disposal boxes
Designed to safely remove scalpel blades, beaver blades and syringe needles



Hands-free transfer trays
Provide a designated area to safely place and retrieve sharp instruments



Capping card
Provides a safe resting place for syringe needles and allows an alternative to the scoop method using a single hand technique



The use of safety engineered devices can potentially:⁴

- Create a safer environment for patients and staff which increases overall satisfaction
- Help the organization to meet occupational health and safety standards and requirements
- Eliminate lost work productivity by protecting employees from injury
- Maintain the organization's status for service excellence in patient and staff safety

References:

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Occupational Research Agenda Stop sticks <https://www.cdc.gov/nora/councils/hcsa/stopsticks/sharpsinjuries.html> Accessed November 23, 2023.
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3. Tattelbaum MF. Needlestick safety and prevention act. Pain Physician. 2001;4(2):193-195. Full text link: <https://www.painphysicianjournal.com/current/pdf?article=Mjky&journal=7>. Accessed November 23, 2023.
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