

# Sharps Facts

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Sharps are commonly used in animal facilities and laboratories. Diseases and infections can be transmitted to animal users and care staff from needle sticks and cuts caused by contaminated sharps. Extra precautions must be taken when using sharps around animals. Proper animal restraint and handling techniques must be used to prevent accidental needle sticks and cuts. Sharps must be properly disposed of in accurately labeled puncture resistance containers. Disposing of sharps improperly in the regular garbage puts maintenance staff at risk.

**ALWAYS** dispose of these items in sharps disposal containers:

- Any medical needles
- Syringe barrels (with or without needle)
- Pasteur pipettes
- Scalpel and razor blades
- Blood vials
- Microscope slides and coverslips
- Glassware contaminated with infectious agents

Still not sure? Call Biological Safety at 333-2755 for help concerning the proper handling of any items contaminated with infectious agents.

**TIPS** while working with sharps:

- Eliminate the use of sharps whenever possible
- Use needles with self-storing sheaths or those designed to protect the user
- Always keep sharps in view and open one needle at a time.
- Use appropriate gloves.
- Never bend, shear, or break disposable needles or remove from disposable syringes.
- Do not recap needles or use the one hand method is absolutely necessary to recap.
- Dispose of the sharps immediately in University supplied disposal containers
- Place disposal container close to work area
- Do not reach into the sharps disposal container
- Do not remove the lid from the sharps disposal container
- Do not overfill the sharps container

Proper sharps containers can be obtained at no cost from Campus Stores at 244-0139 or email [cstores@uiuc.edu](mailto:cstores@uiuc.edu). For information and training on the UIUC Sharps Disposal Program, contact the Department of Research Safety, Biological Safety Section at 333-2755 or visit their [website](#).