

General Or Common Practice To Follow Include:

- Use Standard Precautions in all situations where there is the potential for coming into contact with blood or body fluids.
- Handle all blood and body fluids as if they are infectious.
- Use personal protective equipment such as gloves, masks, gowns and face protection to prevent contact with blood and body fluids.
- Perform appropriate hand washing. Wash hands before and after patient contact, removal of gloves or handling soiled linen, bio-hazardous material etc.
- Use a hand sanitizer when hand washing is not practical. Wash your hands as soon as possible.
- Dispose of all needles and sharps immediately after use.
- Do not pass contaminated sharps from one person to another.
- Use Safety Sharps or “Engineered Safety” devices whenever possible.
- Always activate sharps safety devices and immediately dispose of at point of use.

- Clean up blood and body fluid spills in a timely manner.
- Use plastic blood / capillary tubes and leak proof containers for specimen collection.
- All employees in high risk areas are expected to be vaccinated with the hepatitis B vaccine series.

Sharps Containers

- Sharps containers must be of suitable material (e.g. rigid plastic) to prevent needles from breaching the container (poking through).
- Only approved sharps / biohazard containers should be used.
- Containers should have a fixed top or lid that prevents the contents from spilling out if tipped or knocked over. Containers should have a means of “locking” or securing the lid to prevent access to the contents when full.
- Portable sharps containers should be used when a fixed container is not within close proximity.
- Place puncture resistant sharps containers at an appropriate height to allow proper viewing of the disposal slot in patient and procedure rooms.

- Fixed sharps containers should be placed just below the health care worker's eye level so the disposal slot can be seen before moving his/her hand towards it.
 - Recommended height for fixed sharps containers is around 50 to 55 inches (127 -140 cm) and should be located in areas that are easily accessible and in close proximity to where use of sharps related tasks are performed.
- Sharps containers must be replaced when they are $\frac{3}{4}$ full or the fill line is reached.
 - This helps to prevent over filling or the protrusion of sharps from the opening and / or the sides of the containers.
- Ensure that the correct type of sharps container is being used.
 - Some IV devices or needles have long guide wires, attached tubing or are longer than regular needles that are difficult to dispose of and need a deeper container (e.g. 5 gallon) so they do not spring out and expose the health care worker.
- Some facilities have restricted, secured or locked procedure areas so large needle disposal containers can be left in place on the floor. These containers should still be secured in some fashion to prevent them from being knocked over and having the contents spill out.

General Blood and Body Fluid Safe Work Practices

The purpose of safe work practices are to provide a safer work environment for health care workers who may be exposed to Blood and Body Fluids (BBF) by handling:

- Sharps
- Initiating intravenous or subcutaneous access
- Administering medication via IM, SC routes

Workers may also be exposed to other Blood and Body Fluids such as:

- Splashes
- Soiled laundry
- Bio-hazardous waste or
- Other body fluids.

By following appropriate procedures and practices you will have taken steps to improve the safety of co-workers, patients and your self.



Best practices are constantly changing to meet the needs of patient care needs and interventions.

With the changes in equipment, procedures and care philosophies, it is important that patient care manuals and clinical resources reflect those changes to continue to encourage staff to use the safest, best practices when performing the various job tasks.

The conscious decision by all employees to adhere to the highest standards will result in the best possible care while maintaining the optimum safety and health for the employees.

Sharps CARE

General Safe Work Practices

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