

SOP 6.01 – Sharps and Contaminated Material

Section 6 – Occupational Health and Safety

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Effective Date – 1 September 2018

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Electronically Controlled Document

Purpose

To provide the requirements to members and staff to ensure the safe disposal of potentially contaminated sharps, syringes, clothing and any other waste products.

Scope

These procedures apply to all members and staff of Life Saving Victoria when undertaking lifesaving duties.

Procedures

Due to the likelihood of exposure to infectious diseases whilst undertaking lifesaving duties and the inherent risks associated with such diseases. Lifesaving members must ensure that all sharps, needles, syringes and contaminated products are disposed of in an appropriate manner.

Note: where these items are the property of another agency and it is reasonable to do so, these agencies, should be advised that they are responsible for the disposal of these items.

Roles and Responsibilities

Clubs:

All Life Saving Club First Aid Room and first aid kits MUST have a designated (yellow) secure disposable sharps container. Members must be suitably inducted and trained in safe handling and disposal of sharps.

Individuals:

Handling of Sharps: needles/syringes should always be handled without direct contact: e.g. use extended tongs. Other associated injecting equipment should be treated in the same manner e.g. needle caps, spoons, swabs and tourniquets. They should be handled in such a way that the sharp end presents no danger to the lifesaver or anyone else.

Beach sweeps and similar search activities should be carried out whilst wearing appropriate personal protective equipment i.e. closed toe shoes and gloves.

Disposal: They should as soon as possible, be placed in the yellow sharps container (needle end first). The container should be taken to the needle and then the needle placed into the container. Any member needle stick injury must be reported to the Patrol Captain or First Aid Officer for appropriate treatment and reported to LSVComms.

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Delegations

The Medical/First Aid Officer is responsible for ensuring that all lifesaving members are informed of these procedures.

The Patrol Captain or Senior member in charge is responsible for ensuring these procedures are implemented at an incident.

Operation

What to do if you find an Unsafely Discarded Needle and Syringe

If you find a needle and syringe:

- Do not put your hands in any hidden or hard to access places (e.g. Drain pipes, toilets or thick bushes)
- Do NOT attempt to recap the needle
- Use a sharps container or find a rigid walled, puncture resistant, sealable container (plastic bottles are good if no disposal containers are immediately available)
- Put on latex/rubber gloves if possible
- Bring the container and place on ground beside to the needle / syringe.
- Do not hold the container upright in your hands as you are disposing of the needle/syringe
- Using extended tongs Pick up the needle/syringe by the middle of the barrel keeping the sharp end facing away from you at all times
Needles/syringes should be handled without direct contact e.g. use extended tongs Check the above
- Place the needle/syringe in the container sharp end first; and securely close the lid, holding the container at the top.
- Remove gloves and wash hands with running water and soap
- Place the sealed container into your nearest Needle and Syringe Program (NSP) for disposal as medical waste
- Other items that have come into contact with blood should be disposed of in the same container as the used needle/syringe, or placed into double plastic bags and then into rubbish, or taken to a NSP for disposal.
- Advise children to inform an adult if they find unsafely disposed of needles/syringes
- Call your appropriate local council to report any incidence of unsafely discarded needles and syringes.

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Use of Infectious Waste Bags

A supply of impermeable plastic bags should be kept in the First Aid Room, available for the disposal of contaminated clothing and debris.

Waste including disposable gloves or soiled bandages must be placed in an infectious waste bag and sealed.

Linen, which can be re-used, should be placed in a separate impermeable bag to prevent leakage. This linen must be washed with detergent in hot water (at least 71°C) for 25 minutes.

Disposal of Waste Bags and Sharps Containers

Full sharps containers and infectious waste bags are only to be disposed of in one of the following methods:

- Through an approved medical waste disposal service.
- Ambulance Service.
- Local hospital.
- Medical Clinic.
- Municipal Health Department (Environmental Health Officer).

In your lifesaving area of operation, the club should establish an agreement with either one or more of the above listed services.

Post Incident Health Surveillance

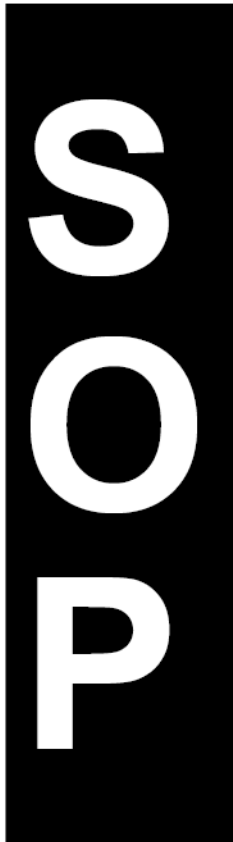
Should a member suffer an exposure to blood or bodily fluids, or suffer a needle stick injury, the incident must be reported to the Patrol Captain or First Aid Officer immediately who will notify LSVComms

The area of the injury must be washed thoroughly in warm soapy water and the lifesaver concerned advised to see his/her own Medical Adviser or the nearest hospital at the earliest opportunity for treatment and counselling. A record must be kept of the incident detailing the date, time, location and circumstances. An Incident Report Log should also be completed.

Keeping Potentially Infectious Waste

No potentially infectious waste is to be kept on lifesaving premises unless the following conditions are met:

- No waste with the exception of recyclable items (i.e. clothing, linen etc.) and sharps in suitable containers.
- All recyclable waste (i.e. soiled linen etc.) is to be placed into infectious waste bags. These bags are to be sealed to prevent spillage.
- All used needles/syringes are to be placed into approved sharps containers.
- The Medical/First Aid Officer of the club is to determine the storage location of these containers.



- Sharps containers and infectious waste bags must be stored so as to prevent puncturing or tearing of these items.

Definitions

Infectious Waste Bag - Used to store contaminated waste including bandages or disposable gloves. The bag is clearly labelled and able to be sealed.

Sharps Container - A safe receptacle for placing syringes.

Waste Products - Refers to items to be disposed of including bandages, disposable gloves or dressings. Direct contact: e.g. use extended tongs. Other associated injecting equipment should be treated in the same manner e.g. needle caps, spoons, swabs and tourniquets.

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