



5. ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES

5.1 HEALTH

5.1.6 Safe Collection and Disposal of Inappropriately Discarded Syringes

Objective

To provide guidelines for the safe collection and disposal by Council employees of inappropriately discarded syringes.

Guidelines for the Collection of Used Syringes by Council Employees

This guideline applies to all Council employees who locate and intend to collect a discarded syringe for correct disposal.

It is recommended that all Council employees who are likely to come in contact with a discarded syringe in their normal work environment are familiar with this policy and also keep an appropriate syringe disposal unit located in their work vehicles.

If a Council employee does not wish to collect a discarded syringe for disposal they are obligated to immediately advise Council's Environmental Services Division who will arrange for appropriate collection. The Council employee is not to leave the syringe unattended unless authorised by the Chief Executive Officer, Director, Environmental Services Division or their relevant Manager.

Procedure

Upon finding a discarded syringe:

1. Survey the immediate area for additional hazards such as other syringes.
2. Locate an approved syringe disposal unit.
3. Pick up the blunt end of the syringe keeping the sharp end away from your body at all times.
4. Put the syringe point first into the approved syringe disposal unit.
5. Ensure that the container is tightly sealed and secured.
6. Record the date, time, location and your name on the disposal unit.
7. Provide the syringe disposal unit to the Environmental Services Division for disposal and occurrence recording at regular intervals.

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Do not at any stage:

- Endanger yourself or other people
- Panic
- Rush the task
- Replace the protective needle cover on the syringe
- Pick the syringe up in any other way than from the blunt end
- Overfill a syringe disposal unit (more than one syringe can be placed in a syringe disposal unit).

Please note that it is recommended:

1. **That if a device is to be used to pick up a syringe then it must be adequate to safely complete the tasks involved with disposal. Items such as “kitchen tongs” are not suitable and represent a significant safety risk to the user.**
2. **That if the syringe is to be picked up by hand that gloves are not worn. A loss of dexterity through the use of gloves when collecting syringes has been demonstrated on many occasions to be fraught with danger.**
3. **That if you have any doubt whatsoever, please contact the Environmental Services Division for further advice immediately.**

First Aid

Outside of health care settings, a person who incurs a needle stick injury (ie who is pricked or scratched with a discarded used syringe) has an extremely low risk of actually being infected with HIV and/or Hepatitis B or Hepatitis C. However, other infections such as Tetanus have potential to occur.

If you receive a needle stick injury:

1. Wash the area gently with soap and running tap water as soon as possible.
2. Apply antiseptic and a sterile dressing.
3. Obtain prompt medical treatment within 24 hours if possible. Take the syringe in a suitable disposal unit with you to the doctor. An assessment will be made which will ascertain the need for testing and post exposure treatment.
4. Report the event on the standard Shire of Manjimup “Incident Report and Investigation” form.

Remember that it is extremely unlikely that HIV and/or Hepatitis B or Hepatitis C will be contracted if exposed to a needle stick injury whilst undertaking ordinary employment duties.

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The Administration of this Policy is by Statutory Services Division.