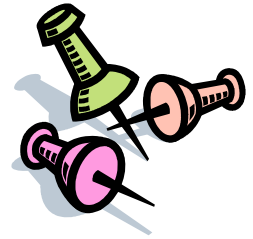




Safety Note

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY



Safety Note #113

PREVENTING UNINTENTIONAL NEEDLESTICKS



Syringe and Needle
Photograph Courtesy of Hopland REC

Information available from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) indicate about 600,000 to 800,000 unintentional needlesticks occur to health care workers annually. The potential for unintentional needlesticks is also present at ANR workplaces where needles are used in laboratory procedures and as part of animal vaccination or research protocols. Unintentional needlesticks may result in animal to human disease transmission, injection of harmful chemicals, or infection of puncture wounds.

Needle Handling Precautions

- When possible, minimize the amount of time spent handling syringes with needles or number of instances using syringes with needles to effectively reduce your exposure to needlesticks.
- Always wear suitable personal protective equipment, such as gloves, protective eyewear, lab coats or coveralls, and/or face shields, when using a syringe with a needle.
- Carefully remove the disposable syringe with capped needle from its packaging.
- Always keep a needle capped until you are ready to fill a syringe and/or begin an injection.
- When injecting animals, firmly hold or secure the animal and inject the needle in a motion that is directed away from your body or appendages.
- If resistance is encountered, do not attempt to force a needle into the intended target site. Select a new target site and firmly and smoothly insert the needle.
- Do not replace the needle cap before disposing of the syringe with needle in a hard-walled sharps container.
- Do not overfill the hard-walled sharps container. Leave about two inches of room at the top of the container.
- If you experience an unintentional needlestick, wash the puncture site with soap and water and cover with a clean bandage. Seek medical help if you have been injected with animal blood/fluids or a harmful chemical. Report any unintentional needlesticks to your supervisor.
- Following completion of an injection task, wash your hands with soap and water.
- When full, coordinate with an waste hauler for final disposal of the hard-walled sharps container at an approved facility. Otherwise, take the full hard-walled sharps container to a campus for final disposal.



Used Sharps Container
Photograph Courtesy of Hopland REC

Occupational exposure to human blood or body fluids is regulated under the Bloodborne Pathogen Standard. See Safety Note #1 for further information.