

TITLE:	Safe Handling of Sharps & Needle Sticks		
DIVISION:	Animal & Environmental Health		
ADOPTED BY:	Council		
DATE OF ADOPTION:	30 August 2018	DATE OF REVIEW:	August 2020
MOTION NUMBER:	OCCS 196/18		
POLICY NUMBER:	WP000003		
AUTHORISED:	Barkly Regional Council		

THIS POLICY APPLIES TO:

All employees of the Barkly Regional Council, Contractors, Volunteers & Visitors

SUMMARY

The Barkly Regional Council endeavours to protect staff, contractors, volunteers and visitors so far as is reasonably practicable, from the risks arising from contact with needles, sharps and body fluids from the careless or malicious disposal of needles or any other reason. This policy and procedure outlines the prevention measures and the actions necessary in the event such as an injury and to ensure the proper management of injuries.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff, contractors, volunteers and visitors. All needles, sharps and body fluids will be treated as being potentially contaminated and the procedures documented in this document will be followed thoroughly on each occasion.

Staff who clean, service maintain areas used by the general public and those who work in waste management may be at risk.

Services and areas where the risk of needle stick injury may arise include the following:

- Toilets
- Rubbish bins/bags
- Electrical switchboards (ESO)
- Waste ground
- Carpark areas
- Disused areas
- Waste management services
- Animal management/vet services
- Sewers gutters
- Drains
- Public pool

DEFINITIONS

Needle stick injury: A penetrating stab wound from a needle or syringe that may result in exposure to blood or other bodily fluids.

Sharps: Includes scissors, razors, lancets, scalpels or other items stained by blood or other bodily fluids.

Bodily Fluid Exposure: Splashes of blood or other bodily fluids into the eyes, nose or mouth. Exposure of non-intact skin(e.g. Open wounds, cuts, abrasions) to blood or other body fluids.

Blood-borne viruses: are able to be spread in the blood. Several types of hepatitis are caused by blood-borne viruses, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and also HIV. This means that you can become exposed to these (and the infections they cause) if you come into direct contact with blood that is infected with one of these viruses.

RESPONSIBILITIES

MANAGERS/SUPERVISORS

- Ensure that the safe handling of sharps and needle sticks policy and procedure is communicated to all staff.
- Consult with staff in identifying possible hazards in their work area.
- In remote areas extreme care should be taken to eliminate hazards that have the risk of transmission of infection and require immediate medical needs.
- Determine whether any operations within their area of responsibility presents a risk of infection arising from exposure to needles, sharps, body fluids to any of their staff, contractors or volunteers.
- Ensure risk assessments are carried out in their areas
- Ensure that all staff contractors and volunteers are aware of the risks and have received instruction in dealing with needles and the procedure for dealing with needle stick injuries.
- Ensure that staff, contractors and volunteers identified as “at risk” are provided with sufficient information, instruction, equipment and training to carry out their work safely.
- Ensure arrangements are in place for the supply and safe disposal of sharps containers
- Follow emergency procedures (refer below) in the event of assisting and injured person
- Ensure that counselling is arranged immediately for anyone who may have received a needle stick injury
- Assess risk of transmission of infection to the exposed person and initiate treatment according to risk. Starting treatment early can significantly prevent infections. So immediately seek medical help
- Report all incidents

ALL STAFF, CONTRACTORS & VOLUNTEERS

- Ensure you are aware and understand the safe handling of sharps and needle sticks policy and procedure.
- Be responsible for immediate reporting of discovery of any needles, sharps or bodily

fluids to your supervisor.

- Do not try to attempt to remove the needle or sharp unless trained and equipped to do so
- Ensure appropriate PPE is worn as required
- When possible use a tool or lifting device to clear rubbish or reach into covered areas where you cannot see, including bins.
- If exposed to a needle stick injury, attend the emergency department for urgent medical treatment
- Whilst at work, cover cuts and abrasions with a suitable dressing
- Before taking food, drink or smoking always wash your hands thoroughly
- Report all incidents immediately

PROCEDURES

Reporting Procedure for all staff

Upon discovery or being informed of a needle, sharp or bodily fluid, a staff member should follow this procedure:

1. Do not attempt to touch the object without using appropriate PPE
2. Manage if possible. If not, Isolate and guard the area appropriately (do not conceal) to prevent harm to others until a trained person arrives to deal with the situation.
3. Report the situation to your supervisor giving an accurate description of the object and its location.
4. Where possible, arrange for the object to be guarded (but not concealed) until a trained person arrives to deal with the situation.

Guidelines for Dealing with Needles/Sharps

1. Assess the situation and decide what PPE and other equipment will be required
2. Obtain PPE and equipment
3. Ensure that cuts and open wounds are adequately covered before starting removal operations
4. Use PPE and ensure sharps container is available
5. Identify location of the sharp or needle
6. Place the sharps container as close as possible to the sharp and open it
7. Do not hold the sharps container or ask another person to hold it while you are disposing of the object
8. Using tongs /litter picker, pick up the object and place it in the sharps container
9. Keep the sharp end of the needle/sharp facing away from you at all times
10. Do Not attempt to re cap the needles. The cap is to be disposed of separately
11. Do Not break, bend or otherwise try to render the syringe
12. Close the sealed container and hold it by the handle when carrying
13. Store the sharps container in a safe place awaiting collection
14. Disinfect the area and work equipment (with bleach solution) as required
15. Remove gloves and dispose as clinical waste
16. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water

*PPE may include disposable gloves (latex, nitrile or vinyl), thick soled footwear and safety

goggles.

* Other equipment may include tongs, litter picker, sharps container, and bleach solution (1 part bleach 10 parts water).

Guidelines for Dealing with Spillages of Body Fluids/Blood

- Restrict access to the area until the clean up and disinfection is complete
- Wear disposable gloves to protect your hands. Torn gloves should be replaced immediately
- Use additional PPE and equipment as needed
- Use disposable towels or mats to soak up the spill
- A Bio hazard kit may also be used
- Clean the affected area thoroughly with an appropriate disinfection solution
- After cleaning, promptly disinfect mops and any other cleaning equipment, otherwise you may contaminate other areas
- Put all contaminated towels and waste in the clinical waste

Emergency Procedures for all Staff

Emergency First Aid in the event of exposure to needle stick/sharp injury & exposure to blood/bodily fluid.

1. If you are assisting an injured person, use appropriate PPE
2. For punctured or non intact skin, encourage the wound to bleed by squeezing skin together
3. Do Not suck, scrub or suction the wound
4. Wash the area well with soap and water
5. Cover the wound with a dry, sterile dressing
6. Splashes to the nose or mouth should be flushed with water
7. Splashes to the eyes should be irrigated with sterile eye wash, if contact lenses are worn, irrigate the eyes before and after the removal of the lenses
8. Contaminated tissues, dressings, gloves etc, should be treated as clinical waste
9. The injured person's supervisor/manager should be notified without delay

Action by Supervisor

1. Transport the injured person immediately to the nearest Emergency Department
2. Inform the Chief Executive Officer
3. Complete an Incident Report

Post Incident Support

- All occurrences will be treated sensitively and the confidentiality of the individual concerned will be assured
- Affected individuals will be given access to the appropriate information and counselling
- The employee assistance program (EAP) is available to all staff

Training

Barkly Regional Council will provide training opportunities to all staff to increase the awareness and knowledge of the risks associated with needle stick injuries and blood borne infections.

LEGISLATION STANDARDS

- Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act – WHS (NUL)
- NT WorkSafe

LINKS

<http://www.worksafe.nt.gov.au/WorkersCompensation/Pages/Injuries-and-Claims.aspx>
https://legislation.nt.gov.au/Search/~/link.aspx?_id=47EB8BA5A59940308183F7C4233B6D2E&_z=z
https://legislation.nt.gov.au/Search/~/link.aspx?_id=A6449DBCFEBA4A5B81D1A0342DAC15B3&_z=z

RELATED POLICIES

Incident Reporting Policy and Procedure

RESPONSIBILITY AND DELEGATIONS

- Barkly Regional Council Staff
- Contractors, Volunteers and Visitors

EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This Policy is to be reviewed every two (2) years, and may be reviewed other times at the discretion of Chief Executive Officer.