



Wadham College

Sharps Policy

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1. Sharps Policy

Wadham College recognises its duty to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all employees. The College has a duty to safeguard those not in their employment but affected by their undertaking. This includes members of the public, contractors, visitors and students.

Employees have a duty to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and others affected by their acts or omissions and to co-operate with the employer and others to enable them to fulfil their legal obligations.

Relevant legislation:

- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) 2002
- The Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999
- The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)

A sharps injury is an incident, which causes a needle, blade (such as scalpel) or other medical instruments to penetrate the skin.

2. Background

Staff responsible for the disposal of waste can be exposed to needles in the material they handle during the course of their work. Needles can be found in:

- Black bags/sacks of rubbish (sometimes needles are pushed through tied knots in black bags)
- Bedding, clothing, soft furnishings and seats
- Toilets
- Grounds and gardens
- Discarded litter/litter bins (inside cigarette packets, sweet packaging, drinks cans)

- Sink U-bends/drains
- Door locks/floorboards/walls
- Lift shafts/ducting
- Demolition materials

3. Risks

The College should take the view that all needles found could be potentially infected, therefore the risk will need to be managed.

Arms are vulnerable when throwing bags into collection vehicles, and needles in black bags (being carried) banging against legs can cause injuries.

Risks include:

- Blood-borne diseases (e.g. hepatitis and HIV/AIDS)
- Direct exposure can happen through accidental contamination from discarded needles. The actual risk of infection depends on:
 - If the needle user was infected with hepatitis or HIV viruses;
 - How much infected material enters the bloodstream – a needle attached to a syringe containing blood is likely to be a higher risk than a detached needle;
 - How infected the material is;
 - There may also be a risk of tetanus.

A safe system of work and set of instructions has been created to act as a control measure when dealing with ‘Sharps’ i.e. needles/syringes and bladed devices such as scalpels and razors. The College will:

- Provide sharps boxes/bins for the safe disposal of needles or vials.
- Operate clear handling procedures for the disposal of drug-related waste.
- Ensure that training and information is provided for appropriate staff in the safe disposal of sharps or drug-related waste.

4. A Safe System of Work

In the line of work that Scouts, General Assistants and Works staff carry out in the College they should remember that they may find dangerous items and should be alert to the hazards that they present. Staff should be alert for obvious needles before handling waste, bedding, clothing and soft furnishings.

If you discover a needle/syringe or bladed device, or suspect the presence of one in your work area:

Do	Do not
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure that the area where you found the item is left as safe as possible and report it to your Line Manager. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Touch it before contacting your Line Manager. • Ignore or hide it. • Separate the needles from the syringe. • Put the cap back on the needle. • Play with the needle or syringe. • Put it in a dustbin, down the drain, down the WC or in a litter bin.

Line Managers will report the incident to the Housekeeping Department.

A member of the Housekeeping Department will then collect one of the provided sharps boxes (stored at various locations in the College) and equip themselves with suitable gloves, a dustpan and brush and/or a pincer tool. They will then proceed to the area where the suspected dangerous item has been found.

All staff dealing with the disposal of a suspected dangerous item will have been trained and will follow the written set of instructions that ensure they will remain safe during the procedure.

Suitable gloves should always be used when using tools to move needles. Gloves should be selected to give a high degree of puncture resistance. Remember that gloves should not be relied upon to give adequate protection on their own, but used as secondary protection in the case of accidental contact/puncture wounds.

Adequate first-aid equipment will be available if required, including clean water and/or sterile wipes for cleaning wounds, and supply of sterile, waterproof, adhesive dressing.

A sharps box is stored in the Housekeeping Department.

For the disposal of needles/syringes/bladed device, or any type of injury caused by a suspected dangerous object, the '*Information for Employees*' instruction sheet should be followed.

Oxford City Council Cleansing Department will collect sharps boxes and replace with a new one. They can be contacted Monday –Friday 8.00 am – 6.00 pm on 01865 252900. Outside these hours an answerphone message will give the contact number of the 'duty remover'.

The following paragraph is included in the online Wadham College Student Handbook and documentation sent to conference guests - 'If you use syringes for medical purposes, they must be disposed of in sharps boxes. Please contact the Lodge if you require this means of disposal'.