OSHA Protecting Yourself When Handling Contaminated Sharps



Fact sheet on employers responsibilities to protect workers who handles sharp contaminated objects.

Protecting Yourself When Handling Contaminated Sharps

Sharps are objects that can penetrate a worker’s skin, such as needles, scalpels, broken glass, capillary tubes and the exposed ends of dental wires. If blood or other potentially infectious materials (OPIM), as defined in the OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens standard (29 CFR 1910.1030), are present or may be present on the sharp, it is a contaminated sharp and appropriate personal protective equipment must be worn.

A needlestick or a cut from a contaminated sharp can result in a worker being infected with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), hepatitis B virus (HBV), hepatitis C virus (HCV), and other bloodborne pathogens. The standard specifies measures to reduce these types of injuries and the risk of infection.

Careful handling of contaminated sharps can prevent injury and…