

Safe Handling of Sharp Material

This procedure should be adhered to when handling and/or disposing of sharp material including any item that has corners, edges, or protruding parts capable of cutting or piercing the skin. For example (but not limited to) broken glass or metallic parts.

RAISE AWARENESS

Isolate the Area or Warn Others

Before attempting to handle and dispose of any sharp material, it is important to ensure others are not exposed to the sharp material. If the sharp material can be disposed of immediately, ask another person to guard the area whilst the appropriate equipment for handling and disposal of the sharp material/s are retrieved. Isolating the area and signage may also be appropriate if a large area is affected.

REMOVING SHARP MATERIAL

Handling or Collecting Sharp Material

Bare hands should never be used when handling sharp material. Instead, gloves (preferably puncture proof gloves where available) should be worn, whilst the sharp material is either collected by a dustpan and broom or heavy cardboard. Where this equipment is not available, and/or smaller sharp particles are present, a disposable cloth or layers of paper towel may also be appropriate. Given the potential injuries that can be sustained from handling sharp material, care should always be taken during collection, no matter the size of the item being handled.

Disposal of Sharp Items

Please note that most sharp material including broken glass will tear through garbage bags, cloth and flimsy paper including newspaper. It is therefore essential that sharp materials are **contained, separated from common rubbish, and not placed within a standard bin.**

When disposing of sharp material, place the items into a rigid box or container such as a heavy cardboard box. If paper towels, cardboard or cloth are used to collect the sharp item, these should also be placed into the rigid box or container, since these items may be harbouring remnants of sharp material. Where utilised, dust pans and brooms should also be rinsed carefully to remove any existing material.

Once the contents have been placed into the suitable container, the container/box should be **sealed** with heavy tape such as duct tape, and **clearly labelled** with information on the contents of the container. For example a label such as "Broken glass for disposal" would be appropriate. The container should then be placed in the area of the standard rubbish removal i.e. beside the usual bin.

Needles and/or contaminated sharp material (such as glass contaminated with blood), should be handled with extreme care to prevent transmission of potential blood-borne pathogens. These items should be removed with the use of appropriate personal protective equipment, including gloves, tongs and an appropriate sharps container. Please contact your local council in the case of needle finds and/or contaminated sharp material which require disposal.