

More and more we are finding needles on the premises; workers are exposed to dangerous and deadly bloodborne pathogens through contaminated needlesticks.

What are the hazards?

Every day, workers are exposed to dangerous and deadly bloodborne pathogens through contaminated needlesticks. These exposures carry the risk of infection with Hepatitis B (HBV), Hepatitis C (HCV), and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), the virus that causes AIDS.

What are the rules?

<http://www.lni.wa.gov/safety/rules/chapter/823/>

If your workers potentially face exposure to contaminated needles you must have a written program and provide training.

Offering preventative immunization shots and providing personal protective equipment (with training) are just a few of the measures you will need to incorporate into your program.

OR

Have an established process designating specific personnel who are trained in blood borne pathogens to respond to needle removals at the jobsite.

Train your employees on the policy so they know what action to take if a needle is present.

Offer the designated personnel the series of preventative injections. If declined, have them sign the waiver and retain those records on file.

Train these employees on proper needle removal using a grabber tool to pick up the sharps and disposing it in a Sharps container.

Avoiding Accidental Contact

Use adequate lighting when working in dark areas to avoid any accidental contact with used needles or other sharp objects.

Accidental contact with used needles can be avoided by following some simple procedures:

- If you find a needle or syringe, always assume it is contaminated.

- Before picking up the needle, notify your supervisor for direction. If your supervisor is not nearby, have another worker get the supervisor.
Never leave the needle alone.
- Use a strong container (glass, metal, or durable plastic such as a peanut butter jar).
- Open the lid of the container and bring it close to the needle(s) or object(s). This will minimize the distance you have to carry the material.
- Use pliers, tongs, or tweezers to pick up the needle, syringe, or glass stem.
Never use your hands.
- **Hold the needle tip away from you at all times.**
- Put the needle, syringe, or glass stem in the container and close the lid securely.
- Do not dispose of needles in the garbage

What to do if you accidentally prick yourself

1. Let the wound bleed
2. Flush the area with water or wash with soap and water. If the skin has been broken, apply a topical antiseptic solution (e.g., iodine, isopropyl alcohol)
3. Bandage the wound and seek immediate medical attention at the hospital emergency department.

Will L&I/DOSH show up to your jobsite if there is a needlestick incident?

The answer is **YES**.

L&I/DOSH will ask for a copy of your written program and documentation of training if they are called out to your jobsite due to a needlestick incident.

Can I be cited for not having processes in place?

The answer is **YES!**

(a fine of approximately \$6,000.00 could be issued)

For additional information sign up for this webinar on April 16

<https://waretailservices.com/event/sharps-and-the-hazards-around-them/>