



On some job sites, especially in densely populated or urban areas, you may come across **used hypodermic needles or syringes**. A needlestick can expose you to serious, even life-threatening, diseases transmitted through blood. The safest approach is **simple: do not touch the needle at all** unless you are specifically trained and equipped to do so.

Why Sharps Are Dangerous

- Used needles may be contaminated with **infected blood**.
- Diseases that can be transmitted include **hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and HIV**, among others.
- Even a **small puncture** can be enough to transmit infection.

Prevention – Avoiding Contact

- **Never place your hands where you can't see**
 - Expect the possibility of needles behind materials, in piles of debris, behind boxes, or in tight spaces.
- Treat **unlocked sani-cans (portable toilets)** as possible sharps locations.
- **Keep tongs and an approved sharps container on site** where they are easy to access.
- **Never push down trash with your hands or feet**
 - Use tools or wear proper cut-resistant gloves and be cautious when handling trash bags or debris.

If You Find a Needle or Syringe

Assume it has been **used by a drug user and is contaminated**.

1. **Do NOT touch or move it with your hands**
2. **Keep others away**
 - Have a responsible person stay nearby to guard the area and prevent someone else from accidentally touching it.
3. **Report immediately**
 - Notify your **supervisor** right away.
 - If your company has a **safety representative**, they should be informed as well.
4. Only trained and authorized personnel using **proper tools (e.g., tongs, grabbers)** and **approved containers** should handle the sharps.

If You Must Move a Needle (Last Resort, with Proper Tools)

Only do this if you have been instructed to and have the right equipment:

- Use **suitable tools** such as tongs—**never your hands**.
- **Point the needle-end downward** while moving it
- **Do not:**
 - Wrap it in paper, cloth, or tape, or throw it in a regular trash or litter bin.
- Place it directly into an **approved sharps container** if available
- After handling, **wash your hands thoroughly** with soap and water

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If You Are Stuck by a Needle (Needlestick Injury)

If a needlestick happens:

1. **Immediately wash the area** with soap and water
2. **Report it at once** to your supervisor and safety representative—do not delay
3. Seek **medical evaluation** as soon as possible; early treatment may reduce the risk of infection.
4. Follow company procedures for **incident reporting and follow-up tests**.