

# **Sharps Collection and Disposal Procedure**

The disposal of biological and medical waste is regulated by state and federal guidelines. At Michigan Tech most of the biomedical waste can be processed in-house either by autoclaving or chemical decontamination before it is discarded along with regular trash as decontaminated waste. In contrast, biologically contaminated sharp materials or "Sharps" require disposal by a licensed medical waste contractor.

## **Definition of Sharps:**

*Needles, syringes, scalpels, and other items that are contaminated with biohazardous materials and are also capable of causing puncture wounds or lacerations if handled improperly (e.g. microscope slides, glass Pasteur pipettes, culture dishes, broken capillary tubes, microtome blades, etc.).*

## **Collection**

Sharps pick up and disposal is scheduled quarterly through EHS. If you have any accumulated sharps in your laboratory, please see that they are placed in the collection box. Notifications are sent to all participating departments; Collection boxes will be available the week prior to vendor pickup in the following locations:

DOW (516-autoclave room); Chem. Sciences S001-autoclave room; ME-EM, (10th floor hallway near 1006); M&M 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, west side hallway); Forestry (mail room) and SDC (janitorial room near varsity gym).

## **Before placing anything into the collections boxes please see that the following criteria are met:**

1. All sharps that are being discarded must first be placed in a container that is puncture resistant, leak-proof and capable of being sealed. Containers specifically designed for sharps disposal are ideal but are not required. Loose/individual sharps **may** not be placed directly into the collection box.
2. Verify that all items meet the definition of sharps: needles, syringes, scalpels, and other items that are contaminated with biohazardous materials and are also capable of causing puncture wounds or lacerations if handled improperly (e.g. microscope slides, glass Pasteur pipettes, culture dishes, broken capillary tubes, microtome blades, etc.).
3. Verify that no sharps are contaminated with hazardous or radioactive chemicals.
4. Be sure that the container is sealed to prevent spilling and exposure to the contents.
5. Make sure that the container can be handled safely without causing personal risk. If necessary, decontaminate the container either by autoclaving or disinfecting its outside surfaces with a chemical disinfectant.

If you have questions about what can and cannot be discarded, the type of containers that may be used or other questions related to the disposal of sharps or medical waste, please contact EHS at [ehs-support@mtu.edu](mailto:ehs-support@mtu.edu).