



Niagara Catholic District School Board

Sharps Safety and Disposal

ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

200 – Human Resources

No 203.9

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In keeping with the Mission, Vision and Values of the Niagara Catholic District School Board, the following are the Administrative Operational Procedures for Sharps Safety and Disposal in the Niagara Catholic District School Board.

PREAMBLE

The Niagara Catholic District School is committed to maintaining a safe, inclusive, and healthy environment for all students, staff, parents/guardians and visitors. The Administrative Operational Procedures establish safe and regulated practices for the collection, handling, storage, and disposal of sharps, exclusive of the needs of students who require the use of sharps for medical purposes during the school day.

The Sharps Safety and Disposal Administrative Operational Procedures:

- Meet legal obligations for a safe, inclusive and healthy environment at all Board schools and sites,
- Comply with the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA), waste management regulations, and medical accommodation requirements,
- Establish consistent, Board-wide practices that mitigate risks and support student health needs.
- Requires prompt reporting of sharps-related incidents through the Board's designated reporting system.

Sharps, including needles, syringes, lancets, and insulin pens, may be encountered in two primary contexts within schools:

1. Improperly discarded sharps found on school property (indoor or outdoor spaces).
2. Medically necessary sharps used by students managing chronic health conditions (e.g., Type 1 diabetes).

The Administrative Operational Procedures:

- Protect the school community from injury, illness, or exposure to bloodborne pathogens.
- Establish clear procedures for collection, reporting, and disposal of sharps in accordance with legislation and public health guidelines.
- Provide guidance and supportive accommodations for students requiring sharps at school.
- Clarify staff roles and responsibilities in maintaining sharps safety.
- Ensure sharps containers are properly located, labeled, monitored, and removed by certified biomedical waste contractors.

DEFINITIONS

Sharps: Any object capable of puncturing or cutting skin (e.g., needles, lancets, syringes, scalpel blades).

Sharps Container: A rigid, puncture-resistant, leak-proof container approved by Health Canada, labeled with a biohazard symbol.

Biomedical Waste: Waste contaminated with blood or other infectious materials, including used sharps, gloves, and dressings.

Certified Biomedical Waste Contractor: Provincially licensed company authorized under Ontario Regulation 347 to safely handle biomedical waste.

eBase: The Board online system for requesting hazardous waste services, including sharps container pick-up.

PPE: Personal protective equipment, including puncture-resistant gloves and safety goggles or face shields.

Accidental Needle-stick Injury: Unintended puncture or cut from a sharp that may expose an individual to bloodborne pathogens.

Biohazard: Biological substance posing a threat to human health (e.g., sharps contaminated with blood).

Safe Disposal: Placing used sharps into a Health Canada-approved container, sealed and removed by a certified contractor.

Incident Reporting: Documenting and reporting sharps-related incidents through the Board's reporting system (e.g., eBase).

SCOPE

The Sharps Safety and Disposal Administrative Operational Procedures apply to all Niagara Catholic employees, visitors, and contractors at all schools and Board sites. It governs two primary areas:

1. **Safe Collection and Disposal of Discarded Sharps**
 - Applies to any sharp found on Board property, internally and/or externally.
 - Staff must secure the area, report the discovery, and safely collect sharps using PPE and mechanical tools (e.g., tongs, grabbers).
 - All sharps must be immediately placed into a Health Canada approved sharps container.
2. **Safe Disposal of Sharps Used by Students with Diagnosed Medical Conditions**
 - Applies to students using sharps for medically necessary treatments.
 - Schools must provide secure, private, and accessible disposal options.
 - Procedures must respect student dignity, privacy, and autonomy, while ensuring staff understand their responsibilities.

BACKGROUND

All sharps found on Niagara Catholic District School Board property must be treated as potential biohazardous material. Improper handling or disposal can cause injury, bloodborne pathogen exposure, and legal consequences.

Key safety protocols:

1. Only trained staff (custodians or designated personnel) may collect discarded sharps.
2. PPE must be worn, including puncture-resistant gloves.
3. Mechanical tools (tongs, sharps grabbers) must be used to avoid direct contact.
4. Sharps must be deposited immediately into a Health Canada-approved, puncture-resistant container.
5. Containers must be mounted or stored in secure, restricted-access locations.
6. Sharps must never be placed in regular garbage, recycling, or compost bins.
7. Full containers must be removed only by certified biomedical waste contractors.
8. Maintain records of disposal service dates for audits.
9. Report any sharps-related incidents immediately through eBase.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Principals, Supervisors and Coordinators

- Ensure sharps containers are available, securely installed, and clearly labeled.
- Ensure staff are trained in sharps handling protocols and have access to equipment.
- Support students with medical needs by providing safe, respectful environments.

Custodial Staff

- Complete Board-approved training for safe identification, handling, and disposal.
- Conduct routine inspections of high-risk outdoor areas.
- Use mechanical collection tools and PPE to retrieve sharps.
- Deposit sharps into approved containers immediately.
- Report incidents and request container pick-up via eBase.

Supervisor of Operations

- Maintain contracts with certified biomedical waste contractors.
- Support site-level responses to sharps incidents (Documentation, coordination).

COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL PROCEDURES

1. Discarded Sharps Found Outdoors

1. **Do Not Touch with Bare Hands** – Never pick up sharps directly.
2. **Secure the Area** – Prevent access using cones, barriers, or supervision.
3. **Wear PPE** – Puncture-resistant gloves; goggles or face shield if splatter risk exists.
4. **Use Mechanical Collection Tools** – Long-handled tongs or grabbers; do not bend or manipulate sharps.
5. **Deposit in Approved Container** – Place directly into a Health Canada-approved sharps container.

6. **Secure and Monitor Container** – Do not overfill (max $\frac{3}{4}$ full); contact Supervisor of Operations (Custodial) for pickup if full.

2. Student/Staff Medical Use of Sharps

1. **Designated Medical Space** – Private, accessible location (washroom, wellness room).
2. **Sharps Container Installation** – Health Canada-approved, securely mounted, clearly labeled, regularly inspected.
3. **Student Education** – Place sharps directly into container; no recapping; age-appropriate instruction; parental involvement.
4. **Staff Training** – Familiarity with medical plan, trained on safe disposal and procedures for accidental exposure.

DISPOSAL OF SHARPS CONTAINERS

Sharps Container Management and Disposal

- **Labeling**
 - All sharps containers must be clearly labeled with the universal “Biohazard – Sharps Waste” symbol and wording to ensure immediate recognition by staff, students, and contractors.
- **Monitoring and Replacement**
 - Containers should be monitored regularly and replaced when approximately three-quarters ($\frac{3}{4}$) full to prevent overfilling, which could cause sharps to protrude or increase injury risk.
 - Containers must also be replaced immediately if damaged (e.g., cracks, leaks, compromised lids) to prevent accidental exposure or spillage.
- **Sealing and Storage**
 - Once full or ready for replacement, containers must be securely sealed.
 - Sealed containers should be stored in a secure, restricted-access area that is dry, cool, and protected from direct sunlight or extreme temperatures to maintain integrity and prevent unauthorized access.
- **Collection and Disposal**
 - Removal and disposal of sharps containers may only be performed by provincially certified biomedical waste contractors licensed and trained under Ontario health and environmental regulations.
 - Board staff are prohibited from transporting sharps containers in personal or Board-owned vehicles.
 - Custodians must complete the eBase online form to request container pickup when required.
- **Oversight**
 - The Board’s Facilities Department (Custodial) is responsible for maintaining contracts with certified biomedical waste contractors and coordinating timely collection and disposal to ensure ongoing safety and regulatory compliance.

TRAINING AND AWARENESS

Designated staff will receive annual training on:

- Safe handling of sharps.
- Use of PPE and collection tools.
- Disposal procedures and incident reporting.

Students with medical needs requiring sharps use will receive support and guidance in accordance with the Board’s medical support protocols.

COMPLIANCE AND MONITORING

The Administrative Operational Procedures align with the following legislative and regulatory requirements:

- Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHS Act)
- Ontario Regulation 347 (General Waste Management)
- Education Act – Ontario
- Health Canada Guidelines for Sharps Disposal
- Board Medical Conditions Management Protocol

REVIEW

The Administrative Operational Procedures will be reviewed annually by the Board’s Facilities Services Department (Operations), in consultation with the Joint Health and Safety Committee, to ensure effectiveness and legislative compliance.

References:

- [Occupational Health and Safety Act \(OHS Act\)](#)
- [Ontario Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development](#)
- [Ontario Regulation 347 – General Waste Management](#)
- [Transportation of Dangerous Goods Regulations \(TDG\)](#)
- [Needle Safety Regulation \(Ontario Regulation 474/07\)](#)
- [Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety \(CCOHS\) – Needlestick Prevention](#)
- [201.6 – Occupational Health and Safety Policy](#)
- [201.6 - Occupational Health and Safety Policy AOP](#)

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