

# Sharps Safety

- A high degree of precaution must always be taken with any sharp items used in the laboratory, including needles and syringes, glass slides and cover slips, Pasteur pipettes, capillary tubes, and scalpels. Sharps must be disposed of in an approved sharps container. Sharps containers may **never** be placed in the normal waste stream or used for any purpose other than sharps disposal.
- **Sharps containers will be:**
  - Puncture Resistant
  - Clearly marked
  - Within easy reach of the work station
  - Filled to no more than 3/4 capacity
  - Sealed (i.e. capped or taped) prior to transport
- Needles and syringes or other sharp instruments should be restricted for use **only when there is no alternative**, such as parenteral injection, phlebotomy, or aspiration of fluids from diaphragm bottles. Plasticware should be substituted for glassware whenever possible.
- **Needles must not be bent, sheared, broken, recapped, removed from disposable syringes, or otherwise manipulated by hand before disposal; rather, they must be carefully place in conveniently located sharps disposal container.**

# Sharps disposal and emergency

- **In certain situations recapping is necessary (i.e. when drawing up an injection solution which will then be taken elsewhere for injection). It will be necessary to draw up the solution, recap the needle, and place the syringe and capped needle in a container for transport to another location. After the injection is completed the needle and syringe can then be disposed of **without recapping** directly into a sharps container.**
- **If the procedure you are performing requires that you recap a needle, use a one-handed technique. Place the cap on the counter top and "fish" it up with the needle when you are ready to recap, keeping your free hand out of the way. Alternately, recap a needle by grasping the cap in a forceps and sliding it over the needle.**
- **CHEMICALLY CONTAMINATED SHARPS**  
**Sharps contaminated with hazardous materials must be placed in a puncture proof container and sealed with a screw-on cap. The container must be labeled as hazardous waste, with the associated chemicals identified. Contact EMP for disposal.**
- **In case you poke yourself with a needle:**
  - **Squeeze out blood**
  - **Seek medical attention immediately (know what was in the syringe)**