

# Biosafety Containers FactSheet

HS04-021B (1-06)

Bloodborne pathogens that can cause serious or fatal infections are a major risk to employees, especially in the health care industry. To protect workers from pathogens and instruments that come in contact with them, they must be disposed of properly in biosafety containers. Biosafety, also called sharps containers are commonly constructed with rigid plastic material and colored red with a biohazard label. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) defines a contaminated sharp as “any contaminated object that can penetrate the skin including, but not limited to, needles, scalpels, broken glass, broken capillary tubes, and exposed ends of dental wires.”

- Provide easy access to sharps containers and keep them in areas where sharps are used.
- Never open or empty sharps containers.
- Maintain sharps containers in an upright position, replace them on a routine basis, close them when moving, and do not overfill them.
- Sort, handle, transport, or ship-regulated waste in containers constructed to prevent leakage.
- Watch out for any sharp object when picking up regular trash. Always carry full trash bags away from your body to avoid being stuck by hidden sharps hazards.
- Do not push trash down into the trash bag to avoid being stuck by hidden hazards.
- Never pick up contaminated broken glass, even with gloved hands; use tongs, forceps, or a brush and dust-pan.
- If you are accidentally stuck with sharps, immediately wash the affected area with soap and running water for approximately 10 minutes.
- Report any injury caused by sharps to your supervisor as soon as possible.
- Dispose of all regulated waste according to federal, state, and local regulations.

The Texas Department of Insurance,  
Division of Workers' Compensation (TDI/DWC)  
E-mail [resourcecenter@tdi.state.tx.us](mailto:resourcecenter@tdi.state.tx.us)  
or call 1-800-687-7080 for more information.

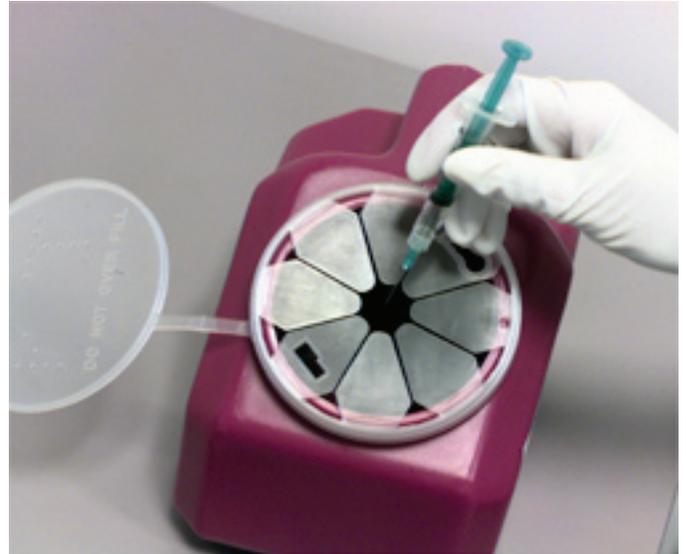


Photo courtesy Ernest Orlando Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory

Disclaimer: Information contained in this fact sheet is considered accurate at time of publication.

For complete information on rules and regulations for disposal and care of Bloodborne Pathogens please refer to 29 Code of Federal Regulations 1910.1030 or visit the OSHA website at [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov) or the Texas Commission on Environment Quality website at [www.tceq.texas.gov](http://www.tceq.texas.gov) regarding the disposal of hazardous waste.

*Safety Violations Hotline*  
**1-800-452-9595**  
[safetyhotline@tdi.state.tx.us](mailto:safetyhotline@tdi.state.tx.us)