FOR WORKERS WHO
COLLECT, STORE AND
TRANSPORT USED
SYRINGES AND NEEDLES

PREVENTING ACCIDENTS

Syringes and needles left in inappropriate places such as regular garbage, recycling bins, streets and parks give rise to concern, cause accidents and could eventually spread infections.

Although the risk of contracting an infection (HIV, hepatitis C, hepatitis B) this way is low, it is not zero. It’s important to take all measures at our disposal to avoid accidental needlestick injuries. This is why an integrated used syringe and needle collection system, which includes using safe containers, is implemented across the province.

COLLECTION

1. When someone brings in a container of used syringes and needles, make sure the lid is on tight before handling it. If it isn’t, ask the person to close it.

2. Put the collected containers in a strong cardboard box, on which “Biomedical Waste: Sharps” is prominently indicated.

3. If someone brings in syringes or needles in a container that is not specifically designed for this purpose (e.g. soft drink bottle), don’t let the person leave with the syringes and needles. Ask the person to put them in a safe container (for instance, put the bottle and its contents in a large biomedical waste container). Give the person a biomedical
container for sharps or tell him or her where to obtain one for free, that is, at a pharmacy or CLSC.

4. Never transfer used syringes or needles to another container.

**STORAGE**

5. Keep the boxes in which used needle and syringe containers are stored in place that is inaccessible to the public.

6. Don’t put heavy objects on boxes in which used needle and syringe containers are kept.

**TRANSPORTATION**

7. Make sure the person transporting used needle and syringe containers is aware of what is in the boxes he or she is carrying.

8. When you transport boxes of used needle and syringe containers, put them in the trunk of the car and not on a seat.

9. Follow the instructions concerning when and where (day, time and place, i.e., hospital or CLSC) to bring the used needle and syringe containers that have been collected. Give the containers directly to the person in charge.

**IF A NEEDLESTICK INJURY OCCURS ANYWAY**

10. Clean the wound with soap and water.

11. Notify your immediate supervisor as quickly as possible.

12. In your workplace, if there is a procedure in place for accidental needlestick injury, follow it; if not go to emergency within two hours to get assessed. When you get to the reception desk, tell the person you accidentally pricked yourself with a used needle or syringe.