

It is possible you may discover a sharp while on shift. Sharps include any object that can cut, pierce or penetrate the skin easily if not handled in a safe manner, such as syringes, needles, razor blades, broken glass or any other sharp implement. Contact with sharps may result in a cut or laceration. It may also result in an illness such as hepatitis B and C, or HIV if a sharp has been contaminated with human blood.

Sharps may be found:

- on the ground in the vicinity of the van or pod;
- in washers and dryers (due to laundry not being sorted thoroughly by friends);
- in rubbish bins and/or sanitary bins;
- in shower recesses.

An approved sharps container shall be available in each Orange Sky vehicle or pod. The approved sharps container is a high-quality, all-purpose sharps container – specifications: 750ml screw top.

What is the procedure for handling sharps?

If a sharp is discovered on the ground, in a washing machine or dryer etc, remain near the sharp, notify your Team Leader or other team members and follow the instructions below.

Steps	What to do	Risks & Controls
1.	Ask a team member to get a sharps container from the van. Tell people close by that you have discovered a sharp and to keep their distance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure one person stays with the sharp at all times to avoid people coming into contact with it.
2.	While wearing disposable impermeable gloves, use your hand to pick up the sharp by the blunt end or away from the point (eg needle) or in the middle if the sharp end is not discernable or if there are multiple sharp sides, edges, or ends (eg broken glass).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The safest way to pick up a sharp is to use your hands. The use of tongs or other implements to pick it up increases the risk of injury. • Ensure there is enough space to move and observe the sharps and your hands clearly. • Do not attempt to put the plastic cap back on a needle if it has been removed. • Do not separate the needle and syringe before disposal. • Do not pass sharps between persons. • Do not handle more than one sharp at a time.
3.	Put the sharp, point first, facing away from you, into the sharps container.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than one sharp can be placed into the container. • Make sure the container is tightly sealed. • Remove gloves, wash and sanitise hands.
4.	Once the sharp is contained submit an Incident Report .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you have any questions or concerns call Service Support for assistance.

Important! Do not place hands or fingers into areas or objects where sharps may be concealed, such as into garbage bags, laundry bags etc.

Disposal of sharps

Sharps can be disposed of at participating pharmacies. Containers should be disposed of as soon as possible. **Sharps containers must NOT be emptied, the whole container must be disposed of.** If you are unsure how to dispose of a container, contact Service Support for assistance.

This guide should be read in conjunction with the following Orange Sky resources:

- *Safe Work Instruction: Handling and disposal of needles and sharps*