

Security and Disposal of Needles & Syringes

Policy Number 5.130

Policy Function Safe Practice and Environment

Issue Date 14 January 2019

Summary This policy outlines the responsibility of Justice Health staff in monitoring and supervising safe and ongoing security for the receipt, storage and disposal of used and unused syringes and needles in adult correctional settings.

Responsible Officer Executive Director Clinical Operations

Applicable Sites

- Administration Centres
- Community Sites (e.g. Court Liaison Service, Community Integration Team, etc.)
- Health Centres (Adult Correctional Centres or Police Cells)
- Health Centres (Juvenile Justice Centres)
- Long Bay Hospital
- The Forensic Hospital

Previous Issue(s) Policy 5.130 (September 2015; December 2012)

Change Summary

- Changes to Dental Room checks
- Title Changes for the Network & Corrective Services NSW

TRIM Reference POLJH/5130

Authorised by Chief Executive, Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network

1. Preface

This policy has been developed to meet legislative requirements for ensuring the security of sharps and syringes in the control and custody Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network (the Network) staff within Corrective Services New South Wales (CSNSW) private Security Operator premises. Conveyance of a non-approved syringe and needle into a correctional centre contravenes legislation and carries a penalty of imprisonment for a term not exceeding two (2) years.

This policy outlines the responsibility of the Network staff in monitoring and supervising safe and ongoing security for the receipt, storage and disposal of used and unused syringes and needles in adult correctional settings.

2. Policy Content

2.1 Mandatory Requirements

Strict monitoring and supervisory procedures must be implemented to ensure accurate recording, storage and disposal of the Network needles and syringes. The bulk stock of needles and syringes is stored in a safe or locked trolley within the health centre and controlled solely by the Network.

Each health centre must have a lockable safe, locked cupboard or trolley to store the working stock of syringes and needles. The receipt, storage and use of the syringes and needles must be recorded as described in this policy. It is not necessary to record the disposal of a used syringe and needle because, when signing for the use of the syringe and/or needle, the healthcare worker is also acknowledging responsibility for the secure disposal of the needle and syringe immediately after its use.

All staff must be aware of the potential distractions that may enable patients to access used or unused syringes and needles. Smaller health centres may store bulk and working stock in the same location. All staff must also be aware that an unsupervised patient may quickly gain access into a sharps container, or into a locked clinical waste bin that contains sharps containers.

All health centres must use the Needle and Syringe template: HPRM document: DG6387/18, Template – Needle and Syringe Register to record the receipt and use of needles and syringes. If there is more than one location for the storage of needles and syringes in the correctional centre, a separate register must be kept for each location, for example, in the dental room, Public Sexual Health Nurse trolley or satellite health centre. The checks must be saved at the end of each month into HPRM container MEDICINES AND POISONS – audits – Needles & Syringe Register. The HPRM documents must be named as per Standard Titling Practices of the HPRM For example "Needle and Syringe Register Checks *Health Centre Name and satellite area 9 if applicable*) Month Year".

2.2 Implementation - Roles & Responsibilities

All JH&FMHN staff within Corrective Services New South Wales premises must ensure that disposal of needles and syringes practice is adhered by this policy and procedures.

3. Procedure Content

3.1 Security for Receipt and Storage of Syringes and Needles

The Nursing Unit Manager (NUM) or Nurse in Charge (NIC) must inform the Governor, Centre Manager or nominee of the receipt of syringes and needles into a health centre. A nominated CSNSW officer or Private Security Operator must be present when new stocks of syringes and needles are received. The NUM or NIC must record the receipt of syringes and needles in a designated register, and the entry is to be countersigned by the nominated CSNSW officer or Private Security Operator. A working stock will be determined and replenished by the NUM or NIC as appropriate and signed out to the Network staff. Each month the balance of stock must be checked with a CSNSW officer or Private Security Operator.

3.2 Needles and Syringes included in the register checks

Hypodermic needles of all sizes and types, including all blunt fill needles, all scalp vein needles, all sizes of intravenous access devices (cannulas and blood collection sets) and all sizes of syringes.

3.3 Needles and Syringes not included in the register checks

Needles and syringes stored in the Emergency First Aid bags must be checked daily and do not require a separate register however, any unaccounted loss of needles and syringes from the emergency bags must be reported to the Private Security Operator. Pre-filled medication syringes, vaccines and Minijets from Pharmacy do not need to be checked but must be stored securely in the vaccine refrigerator or in the medication imprest area of the medication room and any unaccounted loss of pre-filled medication syringes, vaccines and/or Minijets must be reported to the Private Security Operator. Insulin pen needles do not need to be checked but must be stored securely in the medication dispensary room of the health centre.

3.4 Dental Rooms

Oral Health uses a single disposable needle syringe device. The stock of short and long safety needle syringe devices are ordered by Oral Health staff in each facility. The stock of each type of needle should not exceed one box of each length needle syringe device (100 units per box) plus the working stock. The bulk and working stock must be stored securely in locked cupboards in the dental room. The dental room is locked after each dental clinic.

Each dental room has a register for the needle syringe devices. A pre-clinic check of the needles and syringes is undertaken by the dental assistant. The dental assistant must record the date, patient's name, number of needles and syringe devices used for each patient and then a sign off after each patient. A final check of the stock is attended after the dental clinic by the dental assistant any unaccounted needles are to be reported to the NUM.

The NUM at each facility with a dental room must monitor that the registers are up to date and undertake a physical check of the stock each month and ensure that the checks are saved into HPRM each month. The original documents may then be shredded.

3.5 Security for the Disposal of Syringes and Needles

All needles, syringes and sharps must be safely disposed of immediately or as soon as practical after use, directly into an approved sharps container. Sharps includes hollow-bore needles, suture needles, cannulas,

blood collection sets, scalpel blades, lancets (includes safety lancets) razors, sharp instruments (disposable or reusable) wires, trocars, stitch cutters, broken glass and any other object capable of inflicting a penetrating injury.

Sharps containers must be placed (either temporarily or permanently) as close as possible to the point of use, to limit the distance between use and disposal kidney dishes or similar must not be used to either hold or transfer used syringes, needles and sharps to the sharps container for disposal. Sharps containers must not be placed where patients can access them.

Used needles, syringes and sharps must not be accessible to others. Security of sharps containers includes ensuring a patient never has unsupervised access to a sharps container or a clinical waste bin (as sealed full sharps containers are disposed in these bins).

3.6 Reporting Unaccounted or Unsecured Syringes and Needles

If there is a discrepancy in the needle and syringe count, a local review must be undertaken of all needles and syringes used since the previous correct check. Late entries must be recorded as a "late entry" in the register. If the NUM or NIC is unable to locate or account for the discrepancy, the loss must be reported to the NUM or Cluster Nurse Manager (CNM) and the Health Centre Officer as soon as practicable. A JH&FMHN investigation may be required.

Any incident of non-secure receipt, storage, use or disposal of needles and syringes must be reported to the NUM or CNM as soon as practicable. The incident, investigation and subsequent actions must be reported in the *Incident Information Management System (IIMS)*.

4. Definitions

Must

Indicates a mandatory action to be complied with.

Should

Indicates a recommended action to be complied with unless there are sound reasons for taking a different course of action.

5. Legislation and Related Documents

JH&FMHN Policies and Procedures

[2.030](#) *Incident Management*

[2.155](#) *Enterprise Wide Risk management*

[5.070](#) *Infection Control*

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