Winnipeg Regional Health Authority / Office régional de la santé de Winnipeg *Caring for Health* / *À l'écoute de notre santé*	**Operational Guideline**	

TITLE: Handling Sharps – Staff and Clients

APPROVED BY: Healthy Sexuality and Harm Reduction Working Group

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☐ Population and Public Health	**March 2013**			2015	1 of 2

1.0 Purpose

1.1. Staff safety and avoidance of exposure to materials that may be infected with HIV, HBV or HCV or other pathogens.

2.0 Scope and Goal

2.1. Staff providing outreach services will provide outreach and nursing services while maintaining personal safety

3.0 Background

3.1. All relevant WRHA policies (http://www.wrha.mb.ca/about/policy/index.php) apply including policies 20.20.020 Sharps, Safe Handling, Use and Disposal

3.2. All relevant Occupational and Environmental Safety & Health (OESH) Policies, Operational Procedures and Guidelines apply http://www.wrha.mb.ca/professionals/safety/policies.php.

4.0 Procedure

4.1. Staff

4.1.1. Staff must not accept hand-to-hand offers of used loose sharps. Clients will need to put all used sharps directly into a sharps container.

4.1.2. No staff will handle used sharps with their hands. All used needles are treated as if they contain infectious materials. Spills of used needles will be dealt with by securing the area. Make it safe for yourself. Pick-up needles at a safe pace.

4.1.3. When out in the van, if the situation is too chaotic to provide safe service, halt the work until safety can be re-established.

4.1.4. When clients exchange needles, offer sharps containers.

4.1.5. The large sharps containers in the van or in the office should be changed when they reach the full line (approximately 3/4 full). At that time, secure the lid to the container.

4.1.6. If clients are returning an unsecured sharps container, ask the client to secure the lid first. If necessary, secure the lid with tape.

4.2. Clients

4.2.1. Clients are encouraged to use sharps containers with a non-removable lid. The container must be capable of withstanding the weight of the biomedical waste without tearing, cracking or breaking.

4.2.2. If a client finds that he/she doesn't have a sharps container, let the client know that he/she can place used equipment in a rigid, plastic container with a tight fitting lid such as a bleach bottle or plastic soda pop bottle. Encourage clients to write 'SHARPS DO NOT RECYCLE' on containers.

4.2.3. To prevent injuries to themselves and others encourage clients to:

- Return sharps containers
- Fill sharps containers only to the full line (approx ¾ full, not beyond).
- Keep sharps containers close to the where they use.
- Dispose of used equipment immediately.
- Never recap, bend or break a needle a needle.
- When using or exchanging needles with other people, ask them to deposit needles in a sharps container
- .Engage locking mechanism on sharps containers when ¾ full.

4.3. Sharps Containers in the Office

4.3.1. Staff will ask those dropping off sharps containers to engage the locking mechanism to reduce risk of accidental opening of the sharps container.

4.3.2. A yellow liner bag will be inserted into the cardboard container that is to be used for 'sharps containers only'.

4.3.3. No containers other than sharps containers should be put into the lined yellow bag in the for 'sharps containers only' bin (i.e., no pop bottles or containers not designed specifically for sharps). Containers other than sharps containers are put in the large container for loose needles.

4.3.4. Only sharps should be put into the sharps disposal containers (i.e., needles and syringes with attached needles). We pay for disposal by weight and these are unnecessary to put into the sharps container. Used water containers can be put into the regular garbage.

4.4. Sharps Containers in the Van

4.4.1. All sharps containers with used sharps in them, must be locked in a secure location in the moving van at all times.

4.4.2. If space is limited to secure sharps containers, van must immediately proceed to appropriate designated location to dispose of sharps.