**ACTION TO BE TAKEN IN THE EVENT OF A NEEDLESTICK/SHARPS INJURY**

A needlestick injury is an incident, which causes a hypodermic needle, blade (such as scalpel) or other sharp instrument to penetrate the skin. This is sometimes called a sharps or percutaneous injury. The following procedure would also be appropriate for “face splash” injuries, where blood or other body fluids make contact with the eyes, nose or mouth.

This procedure may also be appropriate for sharps injuries involving chemical contamination; however the substance Safety Data Sheet (SDS) should also be consulted if available.

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**NEEDLESTICK/SHARPS INJURY - IMMEDIATE FIRST AID**

*If you suffer a needlestick injury:*

- Encourage the wound to gently bleed, ideally under running water – do not suck the wound.
- Wash the site liberally with water and plenty of soap (do not scrub the wound).
- Dry the wound and cover it with a waterproof plaster or dressing.
- For eye/face splash injuries, irrigate the affected area with large quantities of water.
- Report the incident *without delay* to your line manager/supervisor.
- If your line manager/supervisor is not available, immediately attend the nearest Accident & Emergency Department: **Northern General Hospital, Herries Road S5 7AU.**
- If available, take with you any information on likely contaminants, risk assessments, safety data sheets etc.

*(The above action card can be printed off and displayed in first aid boxes etc)*

**Managers’ Actions:***

The injured person’s line manager/supervisor will need to make an assessment on the risk of infection and decide if further medical attention may be required. Where a **significant risk** of infection suggests that immediate medical attention is necessary (for example, contamination with unscreened blood or a biological agent known to be capable of causing human disease) the injured person should attend their nearest **Accident & Emergency Department.**
A referral to Occupational Health should be made by the line manager at the next available opportunity through the online portal: [https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/hr/wellbeing/referrals](https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/hr/wellbeing/referrals)

Managers/supervisors should ensure that all needlestick injuries, whether treated in-house or externally, have been reported via the University's online accident reporting system within 24 hours of the incident occurring: [https://air.shef.ac.uk/](https://air.shef.ac.uk/)

**Additional advice and support:**

If assistance in determining the risk of infection is required, the Line Manager should initially contact the Departmental Safety Officer / Biosafety Officer with responsibility for the area where the injury occurred. If you are not aware of who this, contact the Health & Safety Team on 0114 222 7466 for further information.

If required, further advice and reassurance can be obtained by contacting the following number:

**HML Occupational Health Advice Line**: 01273 555 666

Open 9.00am - 5.30pm, Monday to Friday

For incidents occurring out of hours, the casualty should be sent to the nearest A&E department without delay.

**Needlestick injuries involving undergraduate students or visitors:**

If the injured person is an undergraduate student or visitor, the supervising manager should assess the risk of infection as above and, if deemed appropriate, direct the injured person to either attend the nearest A&E department or contact their own GP for an urgent appointment.