[Reviewed with no changes: September 8, 2015]

Angelo State University
Operating Policy and Procedure

OP 34.10: **Use and Disposal of Sharp Objects**

DATE: September 8, 2015

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to establish uniform procedures for the safe use and disposal of sharp objects.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in October every four years, or as needed, by the director of risk and emergency management with recommended revisions forwarded through the vice president for finance and administration to the president by November 15 of the same year.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. Definitions

a. Sharp Objects - (commonly referred to as "sharps"), for the purpose of this OP, shall be defined as:

(1) Razor blades;

(2) X-Acto knives and blades;

(3) Scalpels;

(4) Knives;

(5) Hypodermic needles and hypodermic syringes with attached needles;

(6) Disposal pipettes;

(7) Pasteur pipettes;

(8) Capillary tubes;

(9) Broken glass, plastic and metal containers with jagged or sharp edges; and

(10) Any other material or object that is readily capable of puncturing, cutting, or abrading the skin.

b. Steam Sterilization - The act of autoclaving at a temperature of at least 121° C (250° F) and a pressure of at least 15 pounds per square inch for 15-20 minutes.

c. Chemical Disinfection - Use of chlorine bleach or other approved disinfectant/sanitizer to significantly reduce microbial activity.

d. Thermal Inactivation - The act of submitting to dry heat of at least 160° C (320° F) under atmospheric pressure for at least two hours.

2. Applications

a. This OP applies to the following facilities including, but not limited to:

(1) Teaching laboratories;

(2) Research laboratories;

(3) Farm operations;

(4) Field operations;

(5) Livestock research/growing areas;

(6) Support shops to laboratories; or

(7) Any area where sharps may be used.

b. Storage of Sharps

(1) Sharps containers are available at the Office of Environmental Health, Safety, and Risk Management (EHSRM). The containers may also be purchased through any scientific supply catalog.

(2) Once the sharps container is filled, submit a *Waste Pick Up Request* or call the Office of EHSRM at 942-2180 for pickup and disposal. Do not place sharps containers in the general trash receptacles or in the dumpsters.

(3) Whenever possible, the use of sharps should be kept to a minimum.

3. General Provisions

Whenever possible, each department will review the use of sharps in its operation with the goal of reducing the use of sharps and providing for their safe disposal. When the use of sharps is absolutely necessary, the following precautions must be followed:

a. When appropriate, eye protection must be worn at all times while sharp objects are employed in a particular task.

b. Sharps must be discarded in a puncture-resistant container that is clearly labeled.

c. Glass articles such as bottles, beakers, and test tubes are potential sharps. Care should be taken not to break these items when they are discarded.

d. Glass articles that are accidentally broken while in use must be handled with care. If they contain a potential hazard, call the Office of EHSRM at 942-2180 for advice. If they are empty, sweep the sharps into a dustpan and place the pieces into a sturdy, puncture-resistant container or in a broken glass container and place it directly into the building dumpster. Do not place it in the room or hall waste receptacle.

4. Accident Reporting

Should a faculty member, staff, student, or visitor sustain an injury caused by a sharp object, that individual should report the accident as soon as possible to the person responsible for supervising his/her work. If necessary, the injured person should obtain medical treatment. Students may be treated at the University Health Clinic, and employees should consult the Office of Human Resources to coordinate treatment and a Workers' Compensation claim.

An accident report must be completed and returned to the Office of EHSRM within 24 hours of the incident. If injured at a field location and treatment is required, the individual should report to the nearest medical facility. The accident report should be submitted to the Office of EHSRM as soon as possible.

5. Compliance of Guidelines

Faculty and staff members are responsible for ensuring that those under their direction are apprised of this policy. Employees or students who willfully violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action.