

Safety Tip!

From the Department of Environmental Health & Safety
To report a safety concern on campus, please contact ksouza@rwu.edu or cconley@rwu.edu

September's Tip: Medical Sharps Disposal on Campus



The management of certain medical conditions requires the use of “medical sharps,” such as needles or lancets. “Medical sharps” are defined as “any medical item having corners, edges, or projections capable of cutting or piercing the skin.”

Medical sharps, if disposed of improperly, can create serious potential exposure hazards. Bloodborne pathogens (BBPs), including Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, and HIV, can be transmitted from one person to another through exposures caused by contaminated medical sharps.

In order to prevent potential exposures from medical sharps, Rhode Island law states that **both used and unused** medical sharps must be disposed of in special containers. Never dispose of a medical sharp in the trash, a sanitary napkin container, or a sink or toilet! Disposing of sharps in the trash or other unapproved location could cause a custodian to be injured by a needle or lancet.

RWU offers the following disposal options for medical sharps used on campus:

- **RWU students living on campus:** Contact Health Services at x3156 for a portable medical sharps disposal container (and return full containers there for disposal), or use one of the campus disposal containers.
- **Employees, commuter students, and campus visitors:** Dispose of the medical sharps *that you use while on campus* in one of the medical sharps disposal containers now located in the first floor or main rest rooms of each building (note: Law School located in basement & second floor; Rec. Ctr. located in all locker rooms, next to atrium, & third floor).

Remember to handle medical sharps safely:

- Never attempt to re-cap your medical sharp before placing it into the disposal container.
- Contact Public Safety at x3333 to report any unattended or improperly disposed medical sharps. Never touch or pick up an unattended medical sharp.
- Contact Public Safety immediately if you were potentially exposed to a medical sharp.

RWU is not a licensed medical waste disposal facility – **do not bring your medical sharps from home to dispose here!** Visit RIRRC’s website to learn how to properly dispose of your home medical sharps: <http://www.rirrc.org/needles>