

Officers: Stay Safe from Needlesticks!

Law enforcement officers are at risk of needlestick and other sharps injuries when searching people, property, vehicles, or homes.

Examples of sharps

- Syringes and needles
- Lancets and scalpels
- Auto-injectors



If you experience a needlestick or other sharps injury, seek medical treatment immediately and report it.

- Needlestick and other sharps injuries can infect you with viruses, like hepatitis B (HBV), hepatitis C (HCV), or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), that can affect your health.
- Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) (a medication or vaccine to prevent infections after a needlestick or other sharps injury) may be recommended.

How to stay safe

- Complete your department's training on
 - search techniques,
 - collecting evidence,
 - proper use and removal of personal protective equipment (PPE), and
 - reporting workplace injuries and illnesses.
- Ensure you are up to date on HBV vaccinations.
- Ask people if they have any sharp objects before you search them.
- Use tactical mirrors and flashlights to search in crevices or under furniture.
- Do not hand off needles or sharps to other officers.
- Wear gloves while doing searches.
 - Single-use nitrile gloves prevent skin exposure to blood and other bodily fluids but are not puncture resistant.



- Consider wearing gloves that meet ASTM Standard F2878-19 for puncture resistance to needles. Note: Not all puncture-resistant gloves provide protection against chemicals (illegal drugs) or bloodborne pathogens, such as HBC, HCV, or HIV.

- Report any sharps hazards you see.
- Report near misses.

Safe sharps handling and disposal

- Never recap needles or take syringes apart.
- Use FDA-cleared sharps containers that meet the OSHA Bloodborne Pathogen Standard.
- Replace sharps containers when they reach the full line. Follow applicable regulations when disposing of sharps containers.



What to do if you are injured

- Wash the needlestick or sharps injury with soap and water.
- Follow your department's written plan for what you should do and where you can get treatment.
 - Seek treatment from a healthcare provider immediately.
 - Report injuries according to established procedures.



Scan the QR code to learn more about how to prevent or what to do in case of a needlestick.

Reducing Work-Related
Needlestick | NIOSH



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