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Needlestick Safety & Regulations for the Cosmetic Industry

Written Content Provided by

Initial

The Experts in Healthcare
Waste Management



With the increasing demand for cosmetic and aesthetic procedures, such as injections of Botox® for the improvement of frown lines, or dermal fillers for wrinkles, needlestick safety is something which everyone working in the cosmetic industry needs to be acutely aware of as part of their day-to-day role.

The risk of needlestick injuries is the highest among those who directly handle sharps but also among workers who may inadvertently be put at risk when sharps are not stored or disposed of correctly. The main risk from a sharps injury is the potential exposure to infections. When you consider the risk of infection following a needlestick injury is estimated to be 1 in 3 for HBV, 1 in 30 for HCV and 1 in 300 for HIV (for healthcare workers worldwide), it is vital that safety procedures are put in place and are followed at all times.

In the UK, the Health & Safety (Sharps Instruments in Healthcare) Regulations 2013, were introduced to meet a new EU directive which aimed to create safer working environments and prevent needlestick injuries. The regulations require that all producers of sharps waste must ensure that:

- a) The use of medical sharps at work is avoided so far as is reasonably practicable;
- b) When medical sharps are used at work, safer sharps are used so far as is reasonably practicable;
- c) Needles that are medical sharps are not capped after use at work unless –
 - (i) that act is required to control a risk identified by an assessment undertaken pursuant to regulation 3 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (a); and
 - (ii) the risk of injury to employees is effectively controlled by the use of a suitable appliance, tool or other equipment;
- d) In relation to the safe disposal of medical sharps that are not designed for re-use –
 - (i) written instructions for employees, and
 - (ii) clearly marked and secure containers, are located close to areas where medical sharps are used at work.

Health and safety law has always placed general responsibilities on the employer to provide their staff with a healthy working environment. However, this legislation now puts further emphasis on prevention. In reality, it would not be viable to remove all sharps from a cosmetic practice, so the next best thing is to assess the risk correctly, where possible use devices which limit the risk of injury and ensure that all sharps are disposed of in a safe manner.

It is also essential that sharps are properly segregated and disposed of on the basis of their medical contamination. The lid colour of the sharps bin relates to how the waste should be treated and disposed of:

Yellow lidded sharps containers: are for sharps that are contaminated with medicines (excluding cytotoxic or cytostatic medicines) for disposal by incineration.

Orange lidded sharps containers: sharps that are not contaminated with medicines for disposal by treatment or incineration.

Purple lidded sharps containers: sharps that are contaminated with cytotoxic or cytostatic medicines for disposal by incineration.

With many mobile practitioners operating in the aesthetics industry, visiting multiple salons, hotels and gyms, to perform dermal filler or botulinum toxin treatments, it is important they follow the Safe Management guidance, as follows:

Community health workers should use the sharps receptacle appropriate to the waste they generate, e.g. a yellow leak-proof sharps receptacle with a purple lid for cytotoxic or cytostatic waste. Orange-lidded sharps receptacles are generally not advisable for use in the community in England and Wales, unless the community health worker can ensure they are not used for medicinally contaminated sharps. (Safe management of healthcare waste - Safe management of healthcare waste 7658:2.0: England 305 for use in England.)

In Scotland and Northern Ireland, orange-lidded sharps receptacles may be used for both medicinally uncontaminated or fully discharged syringes.

For all waste streams including healthcare waste, checks must be undertaken to ensure the site where the waste is taken is permitted or licensed to accept the waste stream. For prescription only medicines (POMs) sharps units should be yellow lidded (for incineration), according to the EWC code 18 01 09.



TOP TIPS FOR NEEDLESTICK SAFETY:

Always dispose of used sharps directly into an approved sharps container

It is essential that your sharps are segregated and disposed of correctly based on their medical contamination.

Where possible, place the sharps container at the point of use

This avoids the need to walk anywhere with a needle, which creates higher risk of an injury occurring.

Do not re-sheath needles

When the Health & Safety (Sharps Instruments in Healthcare) Regulations 2013 came into place, the recapping of needles was banned. You should use a safer sharps device to remove needles from your syringe.

Do not leave sharps lying around

To reduce the risk to other people, do not leave sharps lying around and ensure they are disposed of immediately.

Report all sharps injuries

If a sharps injury does occur, you need to ensure you:

- Encourage bleeding from the wound
- Dry the wound and cover it with a waterproof dressing
- Seek urgent medical advice
- Report the injury and ensure all details are reported

It is important to remember that when it comes to hazardous and infectious waste generated in the cosmetic services industry, the producer of waste is responsible for the safe and legal disposal of it, even after it has been passed onto the waste carrier collecting it. Therefore, it's important to work with comprehensively trained sharps waste disposal experts who will advise on the correct products that comply with both the UK and EU legislation and safely and securely dispose of sharps. Health and safety law is criminal law and cosmetics organisations can be subject to enforcement action if they fail to comply with the legal requirements. There is also always a threat of civil law action if an employee is injured due to insufficient practices and technologies being in place. Everyone has a role to play in the prevention of sharps injuries, from trainee staff who are learning the ropes, to practice owners who will hold legal overall responsibility for the wellbeing of their staff.

Another quick and simple way to reduce the risk of needlestick injuries is to use innovative solutions such as InSafe syringes – a safety system providing comprehensive protection for the sharps user from the beginning of the procedure through to the disposal of the needle. InSafe's syringe and sharps box ensure that the contaminated needle is never exposed except during the actual injection.

It feels and aspirates just like a traditional syringe so there will be no interruptions to the cosmetic practice when introducing the protective system. When the injection has been administered, the protective sleeve locks securely into place over the needle, protecting staff and patients when not in use. The needle can then be safely disposed of using a sharps container. Specially developed sharps disposal bins are designed for such waste and comply with all EU and UK regulations and directives, with companies such as Initial Medical then providing a dependable and safe collection service.



Rebecca Allen, Category Manager, Initial Medical

Rebecca has worked in the Healthcare sector for the past 13 years and was a Research Chemist with Bayer Cropscience prior to joining Rentokil Initial in 2003. She keeps up to date on all developments within the clinical waste management industry and is an active member of the CIWM, SMDSA and BDIA.

About Initial Medical Waste Experts

Initial Medical is an expert in healthcare waste management, providing a complete collection, disposal and recycling service for hazardous and non-hazardous waste, such as offensive waste produced by businesses and organisations within the UK. The safe management of healthcare waste is vital to ensure your activities are not a risk to human health. Initial Medical's healthcare waste services ensure that all of your waste is stringently handled in compliance with legislation and in accordance with Safe Management of Healthcare Waste best practice guidelines, providing you with the peace of mind that you are adhering to current legislation. For further information please visit

www.initialmedical.co.uk or Tel 0800 731 0802.

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