Needle Stick Injury

1. **Definition:**
   a. The term “sharp” is often used as a catch-all expression for any and all sharp or pointed items such as broken glassware, scalpel and razor blades, lancets, hypodermic syringes with needles, etc., which can cause cuts or puncture injuries.

2. **Responsibility:**
   a. All laboratories that generate needle, blade, glass and plastic waste are responsible for the packaging of their laboratory waste prior to its removal and disposal. Needles, blades, glassware, plastic pipettes and micropipette tips should not be disposed of as regular garbage as they can puncture plastic garbage bags and may present a risk of injury.
   b. The yellow containers for needle and blade waste must not be filled beyond capacity, to prevent injuries due to overfilling. Needles and blades must never be forcibly pushed into a container.
      Caution: Although the yellow containers for needle and blade waste collection are puncture-resistant, care must be used when they are loaded into and removed from the autoclave chamber. After autoclaving, the plastic container will be very hot. To avoid the possibility of injury, never squeeze, push, or apply force to a container of needles and blades.
      Caution: Chemical disinfection of needle and blade waste is generally not recommended since it requires additional handling, increasing the potential risk of injury.

3. **Precaution:**
   a. Needles and blades pose a safety risk and health risk its handlers, disposers and transporters.
   b. Per the universal precautions for exposure to blood and bodily fluids, all sharp wastes should be considered potentially infectious.
   c. Needles should not be recapped, purposely bent or broken by hand, removed from disposable syringes, or otherwise manipulated by hand.

4. **In Case of Injury:**
   a. In the case of a needle stick injury, the wound should be made to bleed.
   b. Flush the wound thoroughly under tepid running water.
   c. Have a co-worker call for appropriate medical attention, and ensure you or your co-worker have the applicable MSDS or PSDS/risk assessment available for reference. Medical surveillance documentation should also be available if applicable.
   d. Inform your supervisor (lab manager, PI, etc.).

5. **References:**
   a. https://ehs.utoronto.ca/our-services/biosafety/biosafety-manual/needles-and-syringes/
   b. https://ehs.utoronto.ca/laboratory-hazardous-waste-management-and-disposal-manual/5-5-sharp-waste-management/