

Institutional Biosafety Committee  
Office of Environmental Health and Radiation Safety  
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215-898-4453

MEMORANDUM

TO: Faculty and Staff  
University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine

FROM: Dr. Andrew Maksymowych  
Institutional Biosafety Officer

DATE: August 24, 2011

RE: **Disposal of Infectious Sharps**

On Wednesday, August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2011 EHRS was notified by Stericycle, Penn's infectious waste disposal contractor, of an incident at the Stericycle transfer station. A syringe needle had poked through an infectious waste box and caught on the pant leg of one of the transfer station employees. This box contained waste traceable to Penn's SOM. This incident could have resulted in a more serious injury to a Penn infectious waste handler or Stericycle employee.

This memorandum is to serve as a reminder that containers intended for disposal of infectious waste (red bags and red bag lined boxes) are **NOT** appropriate containers for disposal of infectious sharps. Used syringes and needles **MUST** be disposed into infectious waste sharps containers (<http://www.ehrs.upenn.edu/programs/bio/waste/usedsharps.html>). Inappropriately disposed syringes pose a hazard to both Penn personnel and to personnel employed by Stericycle.

Please review the SOM infectious waste procedures and pertinent guidance available at <http://www.ehrs.upenn.edu/programs/bio/waste> on the EHRS web site.

If you have any questions about the proper disposal procedures for infectious waste please contact Marie-Luise Faber, EHRS Biosafety Officer at 215-746-6706.

Thank you, for your prompt attention to this matter.