



FALKIRK COUNCIL

NEEDLE-STICK POLICY



Reviewed January 2013

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PART 1

1.1 POLICY STATEMENT

Falkirk Council is committed to maintaining the Health & Safety of employees. The Council recognises that there is an increasing risk to employees from needle-stick injuries as they carry out their work, mainly due to an increase in drug use by service users and members of the public over the last few years. Consequently, Falkirk Council will ensure that appropriate procedures and risk assessments are in place to protect employees.

PART 2

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 requires employers to, so far as is reasonably practicable, ensure the health and safety of their employees. The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 also requires employers to carry out risk assessments to identify potential risks and take necessary measures to remove or reduce and control that risk. These statutory documents are supported by the Council's Health & Safety and associated policies.

This document supports the above legislation by providing a corporate policy and guidance on the management of risks from needle-stick injuries. The main risks from needle-stick injuries are Hepatitis B or C and human immune-deficiency (HIV) viruses.

PART 3

3.1 SCOPE

This policy applies to all Falkirk Council employees and Contractors working on behalf of the Council. This policy complements the Health, Safety & Care Policy, the Risk Management by Risk Assessment Policy and the Accident/Incident Reporting Policy.

PART 4

4.1 DEFINITION

A needle-stick injury can be defined as a skin puncture or wound received from a needle-stick, either on its own, or attached to a syringe which may have been contaminated with blood or body fluids.

PART 5

5.1 MANAGING THE RISK

Needle-sticks can be found discarded in areas such as playgrounds and public toilets where they are normally visible. However, they can also be concealed in furniture and

fittings including obscure places such as behind skirting boards and in toilet cisterns. Employees such as estates staff, janitors, cleaners, and employees who visit client's homes are presented with a higher risk from these types of injuries.

5.2 In order to protect employees from exposure to needle-stick injuries, Services must provide appropriate information, instruction and training to any employee who may be exposed to carelessly or maliciously discarded needle-sticks. Services must also develop and implement risk assessments and safe systems of work taking into consideration an employee's duties. Managers must ensure that all employees are made aware of the Service's risk assessments and safe systems of working practice. A corporate, generic risk assessment has been developed to enable Service specific risk assessments to be undertaken and is attached as Appendix 1.

5.3 Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (P.P.E.) including protective gloves and footwear, must be provided to employees who work in areas that present a higher risk from discarded needle-sticks. Employees are required to wear PPE that has been issued for their protection. Managers of employees working in high risk situations should consider the possibility of arranging vaccinations for Hepatitis B, however this should be determined through a risk assessment of the type of work being carried out by the employee to determine if this is necessary i.e. where the outcome of the risk assessment indicates a medium to high risk and the job role involves potential exposure to needle-stick injury. If the risk assessment identifies the need for vaccination, this can be carried out by the Council's Occupational Health provider. There may be a charge for this service. Further advice on vaccinations can be obtained via the Council's Occupational Health provider on Tel: 503585. There is currently no vaccination available for Hepatitis C.

PART 6

6.1 PROCEDURE IN THE EVENT OF A NEEDLE-STICK INJURY

All employees should be provided with appropriate advice on how to deal with a needle-stick injury. In such circumstances:

An Employee should:

- Try to remain calm
- Not suck the wound, but gently squeeze the area around the wound to encourage bleeding (this will expel contaminants introduced by the needle)
- Wash the site thoroughly with soap and preferably with warm running water at the first opportunity and/or use sterile wound wipes from the first aid kit
- If eyes and/or mouth are involved, irrigate with copious amounts of sterile eyewash or clean tap water for one to two minutes, ensuring that they do not swallow any of the water or eye wash when doing this
- Cover the wound with a dry clean dressing
- Report the incident to the line manager as soon as possible
- Obtain medical assistance as soon as possible by making their way to the nearest Accident and Emergency Department of the local hospital
- Complete an accident/incident reporting form (HR14) with their manager giving full and detailed information

The needlestick may not be collected immediately. If the needlestick poses an immediate risk to others and you feel able to do something yourself:

- Find a suitable container e.g. metal drinks can/bottle
- Take the container to the syringe or needle
- Handle the syringe carefully avoiding the needle (ideally with tongs, tweezers, heavy duty gloves)
- Put the sharp end into the container
- Wash your hands thoroughly
- Keep the needlestick and container somewhere safe awaiting collection

6.2 A Manager must:

- Ensure the injured employee seeks immediate medical advice through the nearest Accident and Emergency department and that arrangements are made for them to be taken there
- Contact the Rapid Response Team, Mon - Fri 9am-5pm on 504600 or on 503050 out-with these hours to have the needle-stick removed. There may be a charge for this service
- Ensure the accident/incident reporting form is completed with the employee and a copy sent to the corporate Health, Safety & Care Team. A puncture wound from a needle-stick that is **known** to have been used previously by a person infected with Hepatitis or HIV virus is reportable under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR 1995)
- Offer, and if appropriate, arrange counselling for the employee. This is available on request via the Council's Occupational Health Contractor

A Needle-stick information leaflet detailing this procedure is attached as Appendix 2.

PART 7

7.1 PROCEDURE FOR THE REMOVAL OF A NEEDLE-STICK

In the event of a discarded needle-stick being found by an employee or member of the public, the Council's Rapid Response Team, Estates Division, should be contacted requesting that it be removed from the area. They can be contacted Mon - Fri 9am-5pm on 500474 or on 503050, out-with these hours. There may be a charge for this Service. Only trained employees should remove discarded needle-sticks. Managers may also wish to discuss this matter with the local Police office for further action and surveillance by them. Managers must ensure that employees are aware of this procedure.

PART 8

8 RESPONSIBILITIES

8.1. Service Directors

Service Directors are responsible for ensuring the effective operation of this policy within their Service. They are also responsible for ensuring that adequate resources are made available to implement appropriate protective measures where risk assessments have indicated that these will be required.

8.2 Heads of Service and Head Teachers

Heads of Service and Head Teachers are responsible, so far as is reasonably practicable, for ensuring the health, safety & care at work of all employees and others in their respective services. Heads of Service and Head Teachers will:

- Develop, implement and regularly review the risk assessments and procedures for needle-stick injuries specific to their Service and their working environments
- Ensure all employees are aware of these Risk Assessments and procedures
- Determine the management arrangements, within their Service, through which these will be implemented and communicated

8.3 Service Unit Managers

All managers who have operational responsibility for employees and for implementing systems and procedures of work will be specifically responsible for ensuring that:

- The Needle-stick Policy is effectively implemented, monitored and reviewed in the area/activities under their supervision
- All employees are aware of and understand the policy and procedures contained within it
- Safe systems of work are implemented and all working procedures and practices are properly documented and adhered to
- All work activities carried out by Council employees are risk assessed and procedures implemented which present as low a risk as possible to employees and other parties
- Appropriate safety equipment, including personal protective equipment (PPE), is supplied, properly maintained and used at all times
- Relevant health, safety & care training is provided to all employees to enable them to carry out their duties in a competent manner
- All necessary arrangements are made and maintained in respect of accident reporting, first aid, access to Occupational Health and counselling if appropriate
- Employees receive a copy of the information leaflet

8.4 First Line Managers, Team Leaders, Supervisors & Chargehands

These employees have responsibility for implementing, monitoring and reviewing systems of work to achieve the aims of the Needle-stick Policy and Service based Health & Safety Policies and are responsible for ensuring that:

- Employees within their area of control are made aware of the Needle-stick Policy and safe systems of work
- Employees adhere to safe systems of work and adhere to prescribed standards; including using specified equipment and wearing protective personal equipment (PPE)
- The Accident/Incident Procedure is adhered to, including the reporting and investigation of incidents, and that remedial action is taken, where appropriate
- All new members of staff undergo appropriate induction training which covers Needle-stick procedures where applicable
- The Council's Rapid Response Team within Estates Management remove any discarded needles as notified by employees.

8.5 Employees

It is vital that all employees of Falkirk Council contribute positively to the successful management of health, safety & care. To ensure the effective implementation of this policy employees will be expected to:

- Safeguard their health and safety, and that of others, by operating safe systems of work in accordance with this Needle-stick policy and other Falkirk Council corporate and Service based Health & Safety Policies
- Wear/use P.P.E as instructed by their manager
- Alert line managers to unsafe practices, conditions or incidents of concern
- Report any findings of a discarded needle-stick to their line-manager, who should contact the Council's Rapid Response Team within Estates Management to have it removed
- Report accidents/incidents to their line manager as soon as possible
- Attend relevant training as instructed by their manager
- Follow the procedures for dealing with needle-stick incidents as contained in this policy and as advised to them by their manager

8.6 HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES

The provisions within this document will be implemented with effect from 12th February 2013.

The Head of Human Resources, in conjunction with Service Directors and Trade Unions, will monitor and review this policy as required.

APPENDIX 1

GENERAL RISK ASSESSMENT ROUTINE TASKS (HR16B)

FALKIRK COUNCIL



Section 1 - TASK/S	Needle-stick Accident Example	Ref No:
Service		
Employee/s Job Title	Various e.g. Employees who visit estates etc.	

Section 2 – HAZARDS IDENTIFIED: (if the hazard is present in the task / activity tick the relevant topic)

1	Aggression		16	Lone Working		31	Temperature	
2	Animal Attack		17	Machinery		32	Vehicles / Traffic	
3	Asbestos		18	Manual handling / Lifting		33	Vibration	
4	Fabric of Building		19	Shift Work		34	Violence / Assault	
5	Contact with body fluids		20	Noise		35	Ventilation	
6	Contamination / Disease	✓	21	Falling Objects		36	Water Systems	
7	Display Screen Equipment		22	Plant Rooms		37	Weather	
8	Dust / Fumes		23	Pressure Systems		38	Welding Flash	
9	Electricity		24	Radiation		39	Work equip/Tools	
10	Fire & Explosion		25	Repetitive Strain Injury		40	Working at Height	
11	Flammable material		26	Scaffolding / Ladders		41	Workplace Lighting	
12	Furniture		27	Sharps	✓	42	Working Practices	
13	Gas		28	Slip / Trip / Fall		43	Other	
14	Hazardous substance		29	Stress	✓		Puncture Wound	✓
15	Infestation		30	Substance Misuse				

Section 3 – PERSONS AT RISK (Enter relevant numbers affected)

Employee	✓	Non-Employee	✓	Person / Child	✓	Expectant / New Mother	✓	Shift Worker	✓
Home Worker	✓	Disabled/ Special Needs	✓	Contractor	✓	Lone Worker	✓		

Section 4 – CONTROLS

Indicate below the reference no. of the hazard identified in Section 2, the present control method(s) and if it is considered these are adequate.

Hazard No.	Method of Controls (Include Council & Service procedures, relevant records held including training courses employees have/are required to attend)	Adequate? Yes or No
6.	Risk of contamination/disease is low in the working environment. (Occupational Health Contractor) will provide advice if required).	Yes
27.	Employees wear protective clothing at all times e.g. gloves & footwear and are aware of the history of the area.	Yes
29.	Anyone injured by a discarded needle-stick will attend hospital A & E Department as soon as possible. Counselling via the Council's Occupational Health Contractor must also be offered for ongoing support, advice and reassurance.	No

43.	Implement management procedures e.g. employees will undertake a visual check of an area before commencing work.	Yes
	*For removal of used needle-sticks, contact Estate's Division's, Rapid Response Team on 500474. (Only employees who have been trained to handle used needle-sticks should do so).	

Section 5 – COMMENTS

Identify hazards which have no means of control, or are not adequately controlled. List any recommendations which you feel may resolve the hazards

Hazard No.	Recommendations
29	Needle-sticks hidden from view represent a risk even although employees have followed all procedures. Services may wish to consider vaccinating employees who work in high risk areas against Hepatitis B – this can be arranged via Occupational Health, however there is likely to be a charge to Services for this.

Section 6 – OVERALL RISK RATING OF THE TASK/S TO BE UNDERTAKEN (Probable Frequency X Severity)

Frequency, scale : Low 1 - High 5	1 Improbable, 2 Possible but unlikely, 3 Happens infrequently 4 Happens quite frequently, 5 Happens, very frequently
Severity, scale : Low 1 - High 5	1 Trivial injury, 2 Minor injury, 3 Hospital stay/Industrial illness 4 Major injury, 5 Fatality
Reasons: 2 x 2 = 4	

Section 7 – IDENTIFY OTHER RISK ASSESSMENTS REQUIRED / RELEVANT (Circle)

COSHH / Manual Handling / **Personal Protective Equipment** / Noise / Vibration / Asbestos / Lead/ Display Screen Equipment / Fire/Other (*please state) **Other r.a.'s may be relevant depending on employees role.**

Assessors Name: **Signature:**..... **Date:**.....

Section 8 – ACTION PLAN (where appropriate)

Hazard No.	Action Required	Person nominated	Date Assigned	Date Completed

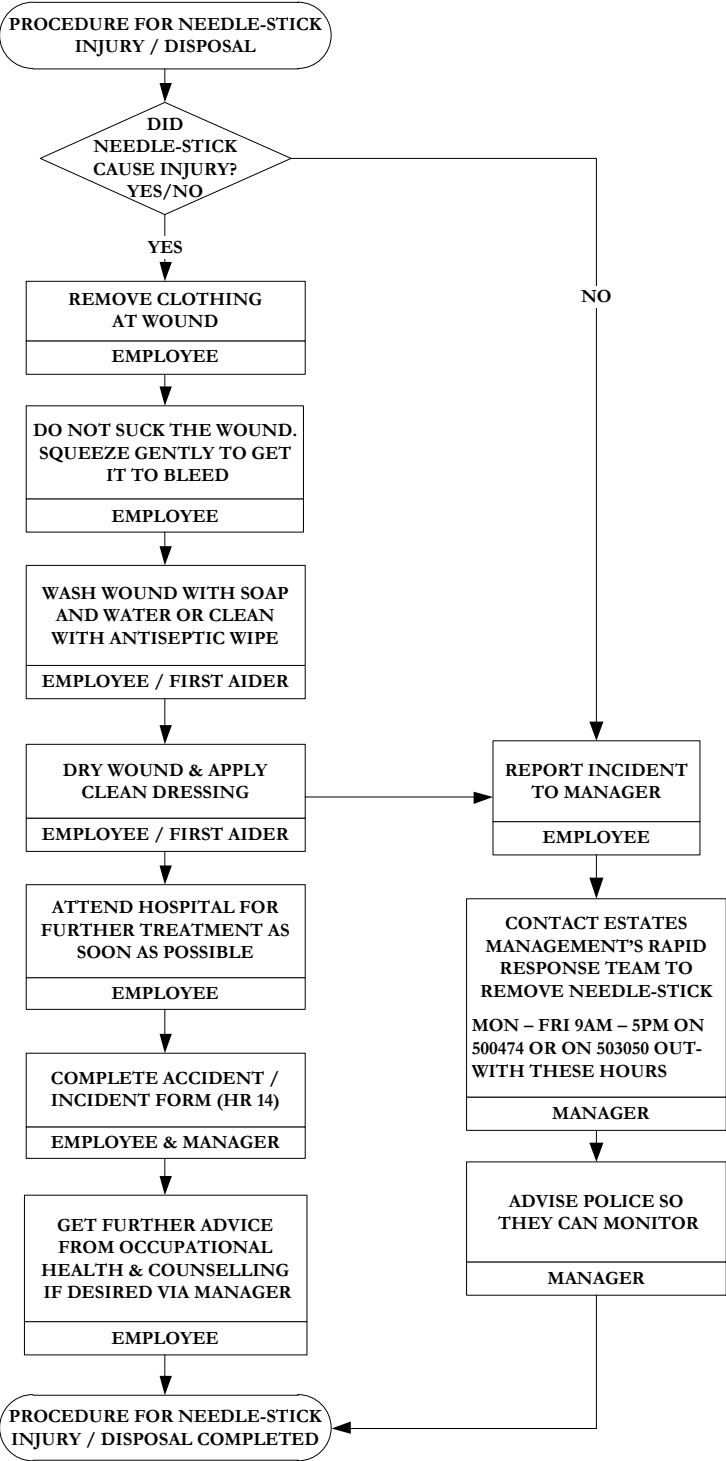
Managers Name: **Signature:**..... **Date:**.....

Date of Next Assessment Review: (NB at least annually)

Note: A copy of this Risk assessment must be kept at the place of work to which it refers and the risk factors and control measures brought to the attention of all employees.





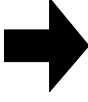
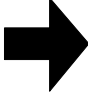

APPENDIX 2

NEEDLE-STICK – INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYEES



APPENDIX 2

NEEDLE-STICK – INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYEES

<p>QUESTION</p> <p>WHAT IS A "NEEDLE-STICK" ACCIDENT?</p>		<p>ANSWER</p> <p>THIS IS WHEN YOU ACCIDENTALLY PUNCTURE OR WOUND ANY PART OF YOUR BODY.</p>
<p>QUESTION</p> <p>WHY SHOULD THIS BE A HAZARD WHILE I AM AT WORK?</p>		<p>ANSWER</p> <p>PEOPLE ARE NOT ALWAYS CAREFUL WHEN THEY DISPOSE OF NEEDLE-STICKS.</p>
<p>QUESTION</p> <p>HOW CAN I PREVENT THIS FROM HAPPENING TO ME?</p>		<p>ANSWER</p> <p>YOU MUST ALWAYS FOLLOW YOUR WORKING PROCEDURES AND SAFE WORKING PRACTICES. THIS INCLUDES WEARING APPROPRIATE PROTECTIVE CLOTHING INCLUDING EYE PROTECTION WHERE APPROPRIATE AND CHECKING THE AREA YOU ARE GOING TO BE WORKING IN INCLUDING HIDDEN AREAS. SHOULD YOU FIND ANY DISCARDED NEEDLE-STICKS IN OR AROUND YOUR PLACE OF WORK REPORT THIS TO YOUR LINE MANAGER WHO WILL ADVISE YOU ON ARRANGEMENTS ON HOW TO MAKE THE AREA SAFE PRIOR TO WORK COMMENCING. FALKIRK COUNCIL, RAPID RESPONSE TEAM, ESTATES MANAGEMENT WILL REMOVE DISCARDED NEEDLE-STICKS. THEY CAN BE CONTACTED, MON – FRI 9AM – 5PM ON 500474 OR ON 503050 OUT-WITH THESE HOURS</p>
<p>QUESTION</p> <p>WHAT HAPPENS IF I HAVE A NEEDLE-STICK ACCIDENT?</p>		<p>ANSWER</p> <p>TRY NOT TO PANIC AND REMEMBER YOUR RISK OF SERIOUS INFECTION IS REMOTE. REPORT TO A FIRST AIDER FOR HELP. IF THIS IS NOT POSSIBLE GENTLY ENCOURAGE THE WOUND TO BLEED, THEN USE WARM RUNNING WATER AND IF POSSIBLE SOAP TO CLEAN THE AREA. THEN USE AN ANTISEPTIC DRESSING OR ELASTOPLAST TO COVER THE WOUND. WHERE RUNNING WATER IS NOT AVAILABLE USE NORMAL SALINE OR ALCOHOL WIPES TO CLEAN THE WOUND.</p>
<p>QUESTION</p> <p>WHAT SHOULD I DO NEXT?</p>		<p>ANSWER</p> <p>REPORT THE INCIDENT TO YOUR LINE MANAGER WHO WILL RECOMMEND THAT YOU GO TO THE A & E DEPARTMENT OF YOUR LOCAL HOSPITAL.</p>
<p>QUESTION</p> <p>SHOULD I COMPLETE AN ACCIDENT / INCIDENT FORM?</p>		<p>ANSWER</p> <p>YES, YOUR LINE MANAGER WILL ASSIST YOU WITH THIS. YOUR MANAGER SHOULD ALSO INFORM THE POLICE SO THAT THEY CAN MONITOR THE AREA. YOU CAN ALSO ASK YOUR LINE MANAGER TO REFER YOU TO THE COUNCIL'S OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH CONTRACTOR FOR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT AND ADVICE.</p>
<p>QUESTION</p> <p>CAN I GET ACCESS TO A HEPITITIS B VACCINATION?</p>		<p>ANSWER</p> <p>CONTACT YOUR LINE MANAGER FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.</p>