



Needlestick Prevention Act

The OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens Standard includes provisions to address the high numbers of needlesticks that occur in the workplace.

Passed unanimously by Congress, the **Needlestick Safety and Prevention Act** took effect November 6, 2000, and directed the agency to make changes within six months. The changes went into effect April 18, and employers have 90 days before the new rules are enforced.

The revisions clarify the need for employers to select safer needle devices as they become available and to involve employees in identifying and choosing the devices. **OHSU's Sharp Hazard Analysis, Review and Product (SHARP) Committee**, made up of both employees and management, evaluates incidents, injuries, and different kinds and brands of devices.

One of the difficulties in changing medical devices is that employees must be trained prior to the first use of new devices. Improper use of any medical device may be unsafe unless you are properly trained. Training and orientation to new products can be arranged through product vendors.

The updated Bloodborne Pathogens Standard also requires employers to maintain a log of injuries from contaminated sharps. Combined efforts of Employee Health, Environmental Health and Radiation Safety, Risk Management, and the Emergency Department have resulted in enhancements to our current tracking systems for these types of injuries. The tracking helps both employees and employers identify problem areas or procedures.

