



SAN FRANCISCO
STATE UNIVERSITY

Sharps Safety

A tutorial for interpreting this
category on the lab safety checklist



Statements from Sharps Section

SHARPS *

1. All types of SHARPS waste containers...have no protruding contents (i.e are not overfilled), so containers can be tightly closed or taped for disposal.
2. Bio Waste SHARPS: Collected in a red, hard-sided container that displays the words, "SHARPS WASTE" or the International Biohazard symbol and the word, "BIOHAZARD."
3. Bio Waste SHARPS: The SHARPS Biowaste tag is attached to sharps container.
4. Bio Waste SHARPS: Full sharps container stored more than 30 days of the full date are not present.
5. Chemically Contaminated Sharps tagged and stored as hazardous waste.
6. SHARPS - OTHER

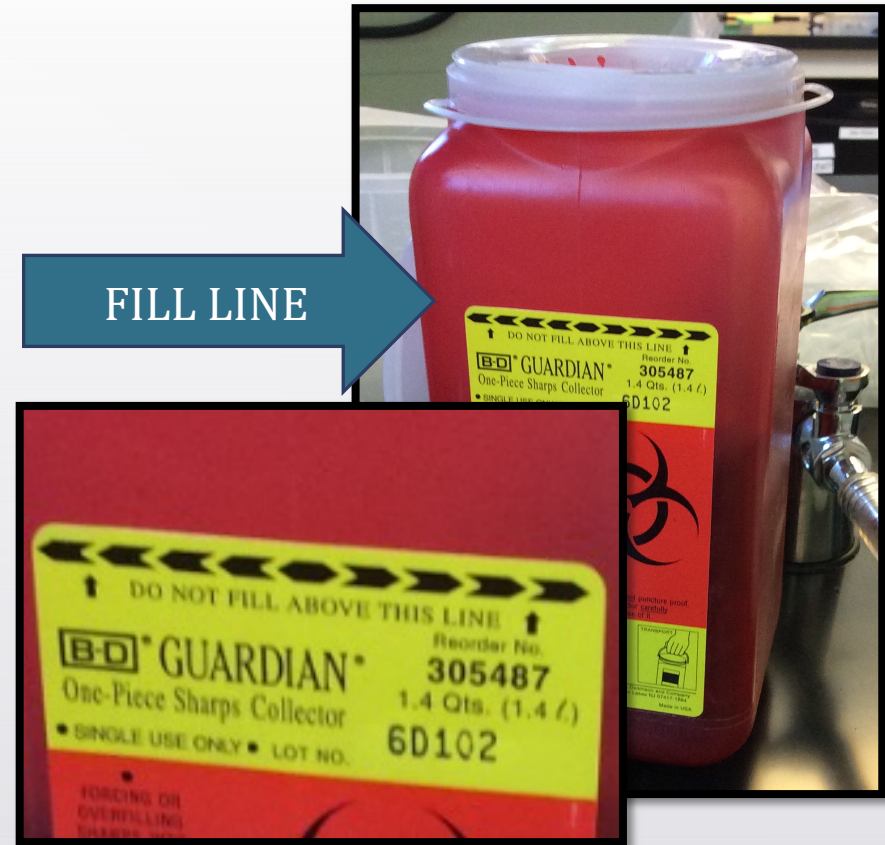
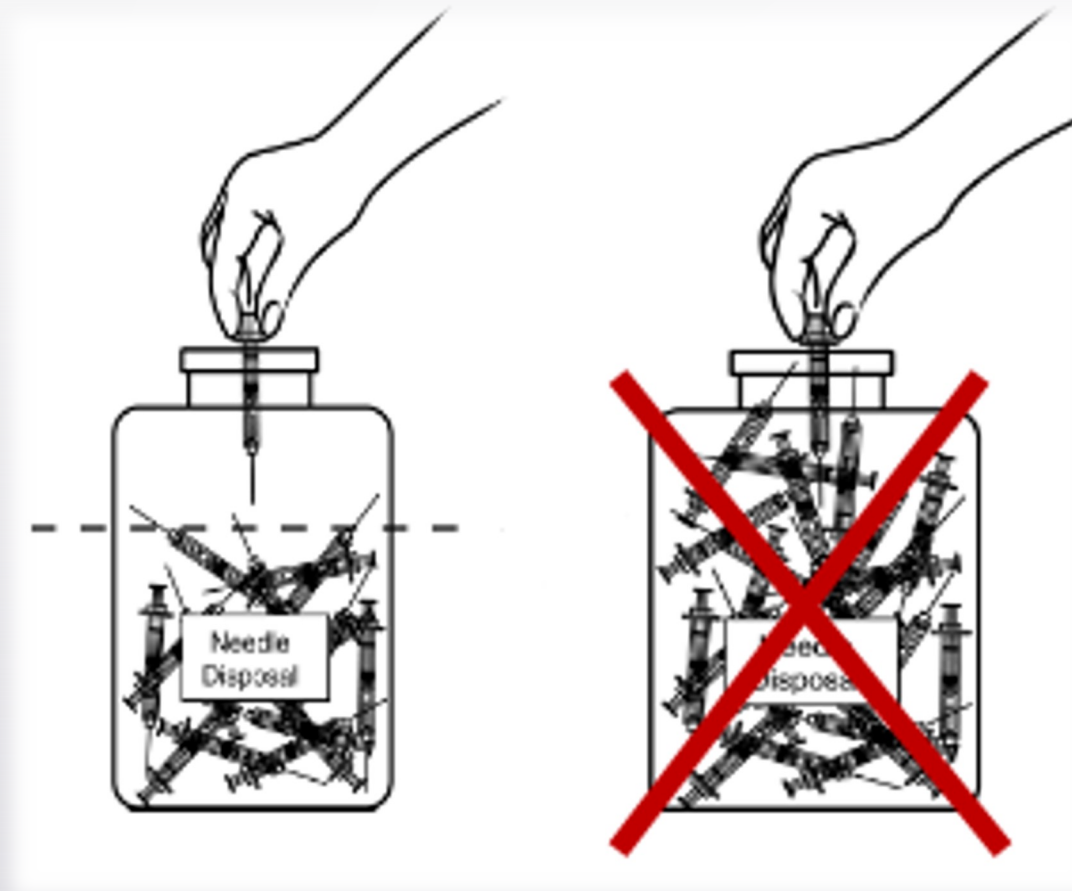
Statement #1

All types of SHARPS waste containers have no protruding contents (i.e., are not overfilled), so containers can be tightly closed or taped for disposal.

- It is imperative that SHARPS containers are not overfilled, and SHARPS waste is safely secured within.
- Most SHARPS containers have a full line mark. If waste is above full line or $\frac{3}{4}$ of the container (whichever is less), then the container is considered “full”.
- Containers must be large enough to completely contain the waste within it.
- A user can get injured if trying to force a sharp item into a full sharps waste box.



Statement #1 Note - Fill Line



Some sharps containers have a fill line on the label. It is considered “full” once it reaches this line. It is ready for disposal at this point.

Statement #1

Non-compliant example 1

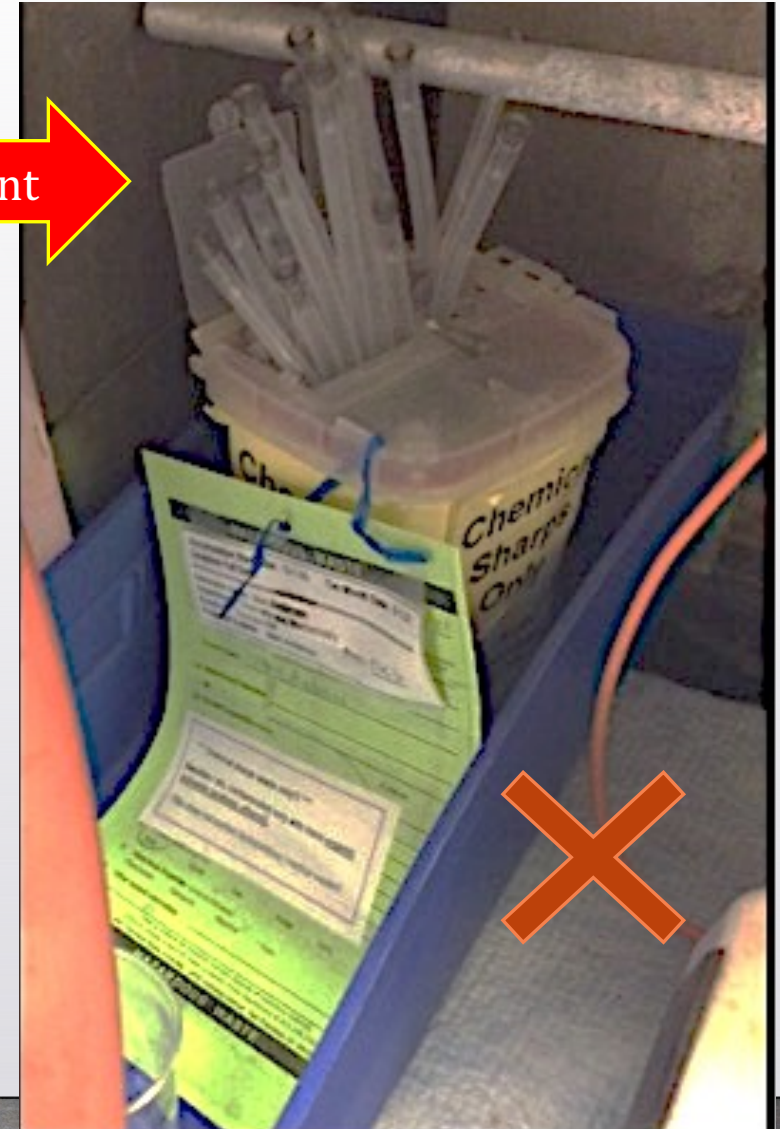
This is a clear example of an overfilled sharps container.

- In this case it is a chemical hazwaste sharps container.

This condition poses a hazard to the users who are trying to stuff these items in the box as well as handlers of the container itself for waste disposal.

- Lab must obtain a larger container for long sharp items that could puncture bags
- In this case, this waste container must be placed into a larger hard-sided container, the green tag attached, and then sent to the haz waste shed.
- This container is clearly full and can no longer accumulate waste.

Non-compliant



Statement #1
Non-compliant example 2

This is another example of an overfilled sharps container.

You can see that the content are above the fill line.

This is a proper sharps container, but it is missing a blue sharps waste tag required at SF State.

Record this non-compliant issue under statement #3.

Non-compliant



Statement #2

Bio waste SHARPS: collected in a red, hard-sided container that displays the words, "SHARPS WASTE" or the international biohazard symbol and the word, "BIOHAZARD."

- Sharps contaminated with biologicals must be collected in sharps containers – designed for used sharps collection
- Red sharps containers are preferred. Yellow or clear versions are acceptable if red ones are not available.
- These containers are designed for user safety and should also meet California medical waste legal codes.



This is a compliant commercially purchased sharps container

Statement #2 –
Improper sharps disposal

Check trash cans. Mark needles and sharps placed loosely in trash cans as non-compliant for this statement.

Non-compliant



Statement #3

Bio Waste SHARPS: The SHARPS Biowaste tag is attached to sharps container.

- BIOWASTE SHARPS tag must be filled out properly as all information is essential for assessment;
- Absence of BIOWASTE SHARPS tag in containers is a common issue.
- If container is not being used (i.e., still in storage or newly placed on bench), a tag is not needed.
- Not being used means that there is nothing in the container yet and the no activities are in place that generate sharps waste.
- Write the “Sharps Full Date” on the day the container is considered “full” or is no longer needed.
 - If waste reaches the fill line on the sharps container, it is considered full by default. Write today’s date on it if there isn’t one already recorded.

BIO-WASTE

Sharps

Details

Full: $\frac{3}{4}$ capacity or reaches fill line
Storage: 30 DAYS once container is full

Sharps Full Date _____

Generator Lab _____

Building/Room _____

Contact Phone _____

San Francisco State University San Francisco, CA 94132

Biological Waste Identification Tag

Statement #3

Example of non-compliance

This is an example of a proper sharps container that is missing the blue sharps waste tag.

Mark this as non-compliant for this statement.

This container is missing the blue biowaste sharps tag



Statement #4

Bio Waste SHARPS: Full sharps container stored more than 30 days of the full date are not present.

- If SHARPS materials are above the fill line, the container is considered “full”
- The tag should have the full date filled out;
- Write the “Sharps Full Date” on the day the container is considered “full” or is no longer needed.

Not Compliant!

- If kept over 30 days after full date, mark it as non-compliant;
- If waste is past the full line, and container doesn't have a BIOWASTE SHARPS tag or full date filled out, it should be marked as non-compliant. It can't be verified for how long waste has been kept there awaiting removal for disposal.

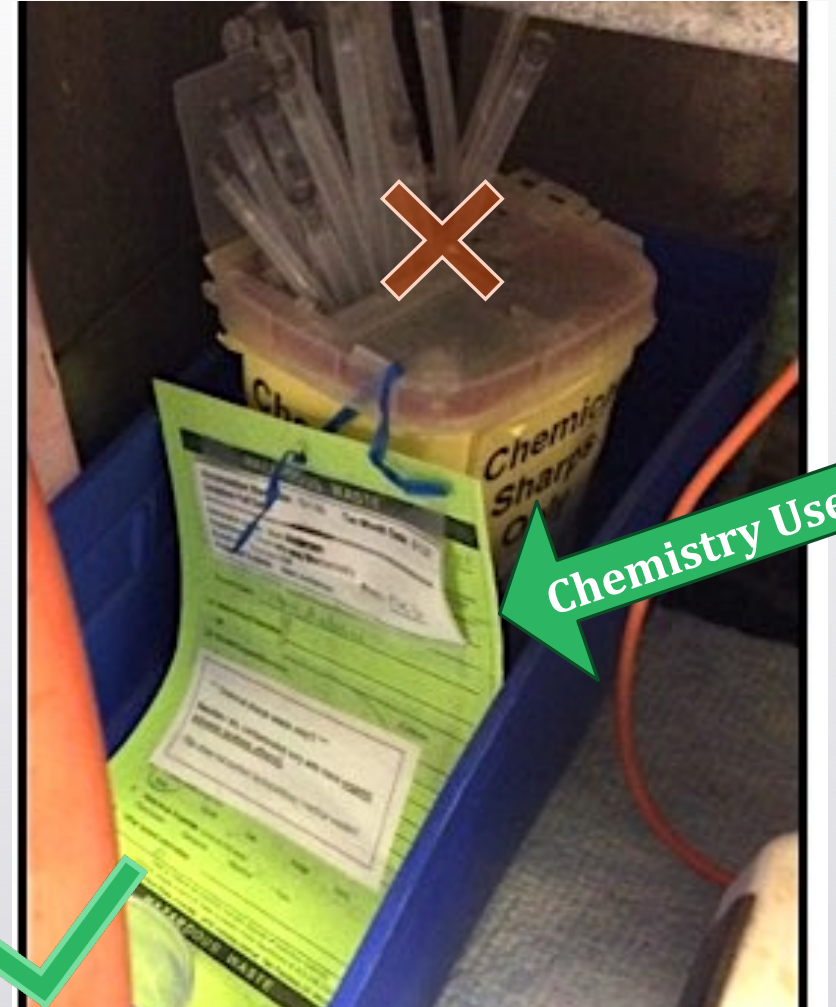


Statement #5

Chemically contaminated Sharps tagged and stored as hazardous waste.

- CHEMICAL SHARPS are sharp items that are used to inject chemicals into equipment or are used in other ways that do not involve biological materials
- Hard sided containers are used to protect workers from cuts or needlesticks.
- Treat these containers as “hazardous waste” not biowaste.
- They must have a filled out green hazwaste ID tag attached.
The example on the right is compliant in this regard.

This chemical sharps waste is properly tagged.
However, this container is clearly overfilled.
Mark this as non-compliant under Question 1 of this category. If you like, you may also write an additional note about the overfilled container here.



Statement #5 – More about “Chemical Sharps”

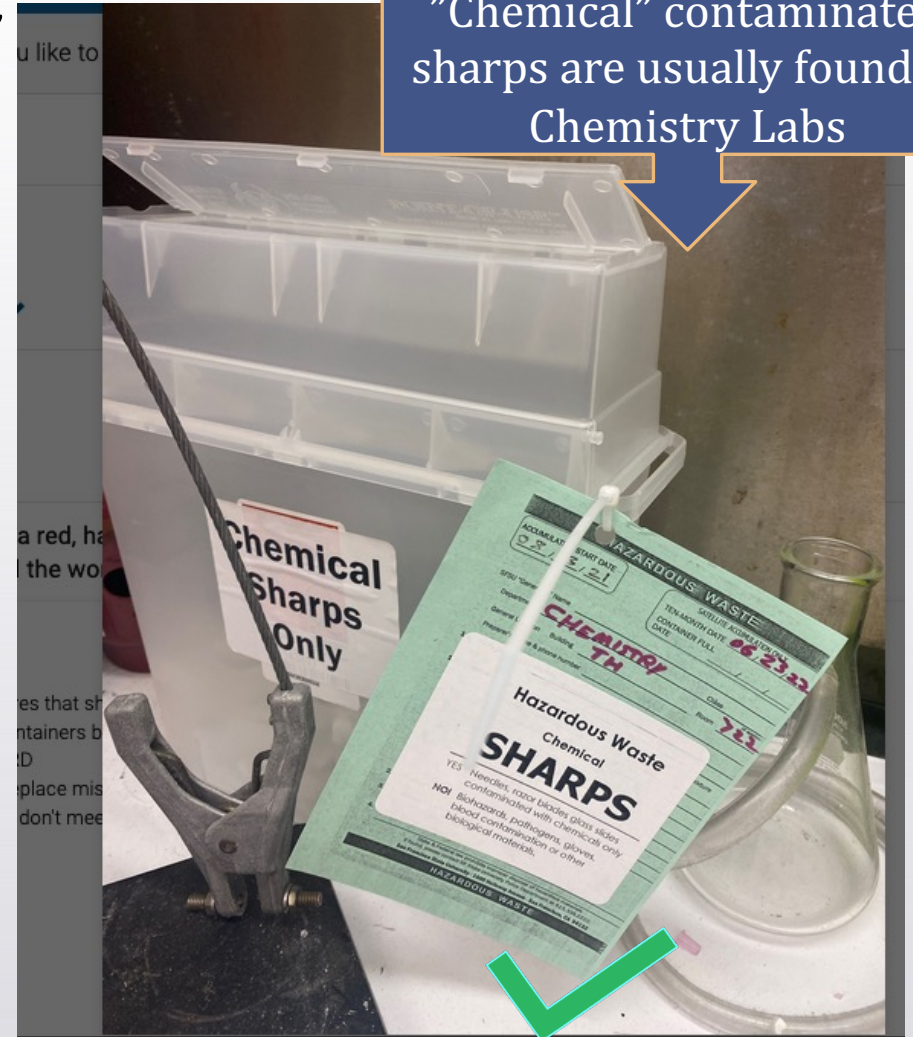
Needles, razor blades, and other sharps contaminated with chemicals must be treated as solid/dry hazardous waste.

- These are used for injection of chemicals into analytical equipment and other chemical-related lab uses.
- Not used for biological materials
- Not regulated as medical waste. Sharps box is to protect users.
- **Important Concept: The example at right is “hazardous waste” not “biowaste”.**
- If you see a biohazard symbol on the container or the “biohazard” text on it, it is non-compliant.

Not needed here

- ✗ No biohazard label
- ✗ No ‘biohazard’ or text or labels on container
- ✗ No blue tag

“Chemical” contaminated sharps are usually found in Chemistry Labs



The chemistry lab sharps container has the correct green hazwaste ID tag and is “compliant”

Statement #5 – *More about “Chemical Sharps” Containers*

To avoid confusion with the waste contractor, the boxes used to collect chemically contaminated sharp items, should be any color except red

- Make a note if the lab is using a red container to remind them to use a different color sharps box next time.
 - If that is the only issue, then mark this as compliant
- Red sharps containers are associated with medical, clinical, biological and biohazard research activities.
- It is not against regulations to use red containers for hazardous waste, but it is not good practice.
- If using any kind of “sharps container”, all biohazard symbols and text must be removed or completely covered up. If these are visible, then this container is not compliant.



The biohazard symbol is crossed out. This isn't compliant. Symbol must be completely covered.

Statement #6

SHARPS - OTHER

- Any other item not addressed in previous questions should be reported here;
- The issue should be described in detail in the notes; A suggestion can also be made in the notes;
- If nothing to report here, mark N/A.



Statement #6 Sharps Other - Notes

SHARPS - OTHER

- Since “Chemical Sharps” are hazardous waste not bio-waste, report findings about hazwaste violations in this section e.g.,
 - Missing hazwaste tag
 - Date on tag is past 10 months from the accumulation start date
 - Missing information on hazwaste tag

For other hazardous waste storage violations, record them under Chemical Storage – Other.

These sharps containers are intended for chemical waste such as contaminated needles and razors. Avoid red sharps containers for chemical waste.





Things to consider

Checklist Options



Can mean “good”, “okay”, “compliant”, “acceptable” “ok but not ideal”



Can mean “unsafe”, “not acceptable”, “not compliant”, “ maybe unacceptable, so requires verification”

There are so many unique situations and equipment setups in academic laboratories and activity spaces can’t be adequately covered by a handful of safety statements in the INSPECT app.

Often it is a judgement call whether a situation is “in compliance” or not.