

Optimal Settings for Needle Removers



Use of a needle remover at the point of use is one approach for managing sharps waste. Needle-remover devices may be more appropriate for some health care settings than others, thus it is important to review the characteristics of each setting to determine whether a needle-removal device is suitable. Below are descriptions of health facilities and injection settings detailing characteristics for (1) the optimal use of needle removers and (2) where needle remover use is not recommended:

Site Characteristics	Where Needle-Remover Use is Optimal	Where Needle-Remover Use is Not Recommended
Point of Injection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Static injection points.▪ Wards where reliable carts for transporting injection equipment are available and acceptable.▪ Outreach or campaign settings (some device designs may be more appropriate than others).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Wards where the injection provider moves from bed to bed without a cart.
Disposal Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ No incinerator on site.▪ No secure final disposal site for used syringes (community/ animals have access to waste).▪ Appropriate final disposal (e.g., recycling, burial, or autoclave) for defanged syringes is available.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Incinerator on site.▪ No safe method of final disposal for removed needles on site (i.e., no needle pit or barrel).
Supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Lack of, or inconsistent supply of, safety boxes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Not enough needle removers to have one at each injection site.▪ Exclusive use of retractable syringes.
Unsafe Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Poor or no medical waste segregation practiced.▪ Poor compliance with use of safety boxes.▪ High level of concern about reuse of syringes before final disposal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Incorrect use of needle removers observed after repeated supervision visits.

Infrastructure and training requirements

Before introducing needle removers, the following infrastructure and training requirements must be in place:

- All staff are trained on proper needle remover device use and maintenance.
- A needle pit or needle barrel is available on site for final disposal of needles.

Benefits of using needle removers in optimal settings:

- Prevents reuse of syringes.
- Needle removal will immediately contain sharps and reduce possibility of harm to waste handler and community.
- Needles are disposed of on site, in a protected sharps pit or barrel.
- Reduces the number of safety boxes used.
- If transport system is in place, reduces risk to personnel when handling safety boxes.

Alternative medical waste disposal strategies where needle-remover use is not recommended:

- Syringes should be immediately contained in safety boxes.
- Incineration/final disposal of syringes should take place frequently.

Considerations for using needle removers in selected wards:

- It is OK to use needle removers in some areas of a health facility but not in others, BUT there does need to be a clear plan for sharps disposal in those areas where needle removers are not used.
- There must be clear instruction and guidance on these different plans to guide appropriate waste disposal practices for health workers who move between different areas.
- There must also be clear procedures and guidance for waste handlers on the final disposal of different sharps waste from within a facility.

Considerations for training on needle-remover use:

- It is critical that all staff who give injections are trained on proper use and maintenance.
- In facilities where there is a high turnover rate for staff, a strong training and supervision system must be in place. If there is no such system, needle removers may not be appropriate in the facility.