

**Lyell McEwin Regional Volunteer Association Inc**



**POLICY & PROCEDURES DOCUMENT**

**POLICY TITLE:**                    **AVOIDANCE OF NEEDLE STICK INJURIES**

**POLICY NUMBER:**                    **11.3**

**POLICY STATEMENT:**

*The Board of the Volunteer Association are committed to providing a working environment in all areas of its operations, which is conducive to the safety of its volunteers, staff and those to whom it provides a service.*

*Volunteers and paid staff of the Association shall be able to work in an environment which minimises the risk of needle stick injury as a result of working in a health based setting.*

*This policy statement is made in accordance with guidelines set out in the Occupational Health, Welfare and Safety Act (1986) & relevant policies of CNAHS*

**EXPECTED OUTCOMES:**

- That the risk of exposure to needle stick injuries shall be minimised
- That volunteers and paid staff shall clearly understand how to deal with used syringes should they be confronted with this situation
- That paid and volunteer staff shall be clear about where to go for further advice regarding matters pertaining to needle stick injuries and the safe disposal of syringes

**PROCEDURES (To implement Policy)**

1. *Volunteers working in clinical (ward areas)* who come across needles which have not been properly disposed of should ensure that the needle does not pose a threat to others and alert the team leader that the needle is present. Clinical staff shall then be responsible for its safe removal. In clinical situations volunteers, must *not* touch needles under any circumstance
2. *In the front foyer of LMH (eg PSG, Kiosk)* volunteers and paid staff may experience visitors coming into the hospital to dispose of needles. Visitors are to be offered the yellow syringe disposal unit kept in the Patient Support Group area and asked to place the needles directly into that container.
3. In times that visitors do not do this (eg. Needles are left in a bag on the front counter), staff should ensure that others are warned of their presence so as to ensure that a needle stick injury does not occur, and the Infection Control Coordinator or Risk Management Services should be contacted to remove the needles. Staff from these areas will do so using tools specifically for this purpose. Volunteers should not remove the needles from the area for any reason. After hours volunteers should contact ISS

4. ***Volunteers / staff working in other areas*** who may encounter needles (eg people's homes, while on bus trips etc) should determine the most appropriate course of action utilising the following principles;
  - **Risk Minimisation** - Ensure that the needle(s) are in a safe place which minimises the risk of needle stick injuries by themselves and others.
  - **Safe Handling** - In cases where a volunteer may need to pick up a needle(s) they should try and do so using a pair of tongs or pliers if possible. Where this is not possible needles should never be picked up by the point and should be transported to the nearest safe place in a careful and timely fashion.
  - **Reporting** - Volunteers should then report the incident to their Area Manager, Team Leader or the EO who shall ensure that the matter is followed up in an appropriate way
5. Volunteers and paid staff who have other questions relating to the disposal of syringes and the possible effects of needle stick injury may contact the Risk Management Services or the Infection Control Coordinator at LMH
6. ***In the case of a volunteer or paid staff member sustaining a needle stick injury***, a Volunteer Association 'Safety Report Form' (attached) shall be immediately completed and the Executive Officer and Area Manager / Team Leader notified. The EO in turn shall report the incident to Risk Management Services. The injured volunteer or paid staff may attend Emergency Department or their own treating doctor for medical counselling and relevant follow up (eg blood tests).

Last reviewed

Dated: 21<sup>st</sup> February 2008