

OP 3	Occupational Needle Stick Injury Policy
Operational as of November 1st 2008	For review: October 31st 2009

1 Policy Statement

Ana Liffey Drug Project is committed to managing risks to its staff, locum workers and volunteers at work

2 Purpose

Ana Liffey Drug Project recognises its obligation and strives to ensure that there are proper working practices for staff, locum workers and volunteers in all aspects of their work. This policy defines those practices in the case of *occupational needle stick injuries*.

3 Scope

The definition of a *needle stick injury* is “A penetrating stab wound from a needle (or other sharp object) that may result in exposure to blood or other body fluids”

This policy applies to all staff, locum and volunteers where an *occupational needlestick injury* occurs.

4 Procedure

In the event of a staff member, locum worker or volunteer sustaining a needlestick injury, the following procedure must be followed IMMEDIATELY.

4.1 Person sustaining needlestick injury / staff member assisting them:

1. Don't panic. Seek assistance.
2. Treat the wound appropriately
 - a. Put on rubber gloves (if you are assisting a colleague who has sustained the needlestick injury)
 - b. Clean area with sterile swab and/or wash with soap and water
 - c. Encourage bleeding from the puncture wound, and continue to flush the wound with water.
 - d. Safely dispose of swab and gloves
3. Ensure a manager is informed
4. A manager will accompany the injured staff member to St. James' Hospital.

4.2 Remaining Staff:

1. Place the needle in a sharps disposal unit using the needleproof gloves
2. If possible, identify the donor (the service user whose needle it was), meet with them and:
 - a. Inform them that there has been a needlestick incident involving a needle that may belong to them
 - b. Ask them if they will consent to share the following information.
 - i. HIV and HEP.C status (if known)
 - ii. Name
 - iii. Date of Birth

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- iv. If they have used the needle in question (if known)
- v. If they have shared the needle in question with anyone (if known)
- c. If the donor does not consent to sharing information on their medical status such information **MUST NOT** be shared outside the organisation. This applies even where we have such information on file.

3. Ask the donor if they are willing to give a blood sample at the hospital for the purposes of testing for Blood Borne Viruses (BBVs). Make it clear to them that they are in no way obliged to do this – it is their choice.

4. If the donor is willing to be tested for BBVs, liaise with the manager at the hospital and see if it is feasible to bring them to A & E in James' St. Hospital immediately.

5. Record the event in writing and pass this record on to a manager

4.3 At the hospital

The following procedure is likely:

- You may have to wait in A&E
- Hospital staff will explain the procedure to you
- Blood samples will be taken
- You will get a tetanus shot
- You may get other shots
- You will be given an appointment for the GUIDE¹ clinic
- You will be given meds to take according to the hospital's protocol. These will probably be a short course of meds to cover you until you attend the GUIDE clinic.

4.4 Recording (for the injured staff member)

If possible, the injured staff member should provide a written report of the incident to a manager within 24 hours. Alternatively, the injured staff member may dictate a report of the incident to a manager. In either case, this incident statement should be signed and dated.

4.5 Support

The injured party's supervisor should offer regular and sustained support to the injured party's following a needlestick injury.

ALDP will ensure that any staff member, locum staff or volunteer who sustains a needlestick injury at work has access to external debriefing sessions, if required.

4.6 Management Issues

4.6.1 Process

Management should ensure the follow process is followed:

¹ Based in Hospital 5, St James Hospital, the GUIDE clinic (Department of Genito-Urinary Medicine and Infectious Disease) specialises in the care of people with sexually transmitted Infections (also called STI, or STDs), HIV and general infectious diseases (ID). GUIDE can be contacted on 01-4162315/6.

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- **ESCORT** the injured party to the hospital
- **SUPPORT** the injured party as per this policy statement
- **REPORT** the incident appropriately and ensure that witnesses do likewise. In the event that the injured party refuses assistance or medical attention, ensure that they sign a statement saying support was offered but refused.

4.6.2 Incident reporting

Management are obliged to report the incident to:

- ALDP's insurers
- The Health and Safety Authority, using Form IR 1.