

HAZARD ALERT

HSE-ALERT-001

Date: 25th November 2015

Area of Concern: All JCU Campuses

NEEDLE STICK INJURY

An event recently occurred where a staff member was turning the tap on to wash their hands and came into contact with an incorrectly disposed needle.

Needle-stick injuries can cause considerable anxiety because of the fear of contracting blood-borne diseases such as HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C as well as other diseases such as tetanus. Where needles/syringes are found within at JCU, it is important that they are disposed of promptly and safely to ensure staff, students and others are not harmed.

Any person who may come across used needles in public areas can prevent an injury by:

- being alert for concealed needles
- not placing hands in areas or objects where you cannot see as sharps may be concealed there e.g. overgrown garden beds, rubbish bins or behind toilets. Use tongs or rubbish grabbers to pick up or move rubbish.
- do not manually compress rubbish bags in case they contain needles / syringes
- wearing appropriate footwear
- using puncture-resistant gloves, if these are provided

If a discarded needle is found:

- contact Security, or
- place it safely in a rigid-walled, puncture resistant container
- secure the container

If a needle-stick injury is sustained it is important to:

- stay calm
- encourage the wound to bleed (gently squeeze then wash the area with soap and water for at least 30 seconds)
- It is important to medically assess as soon as possible. Contact a doctor or hospital emergency department promptly to arrange blood testing.
- report the incident to a supervisor or manager immediately.

