

THE ADVISOR

MONTHLY COMPLIANCE COMMUNICATOR



NEEDLESTICK SAFETY AND PREVENTION ACT

Many busy healthcare providers know how important it is to prevent needlesticks, but they will draw a blank when asked to explain the Needlestick Safety and Prevention Act of 2000. Why do we have to follow it? Just like the requirement to wear a seat belt when you drive, following the Needlestick Safety and Prevention Act is not a choice; it is a requirement.

A sharp is any device that can puncture or cut the skin, such as needles, syringes, or lancets. Sharps are regulated because of their potential for spreading bloodborne pathogens like hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and Human Immunodeficiency Virus. The Center for Disease Control estimates that as many as 88% of all sharps injuries can be prevented using safety devices and better work practice controls.

So, what are the requirements?

- 1 - Employers must provide and enforce the use of engineering controls such as safety needles, syringes, sharps containers, blade removers, needle recappers, etc., that have the best possible safety design available for preventing accidental sticks. A good way to start your compliance is to become aware of what is currently in use in your practice. Create an inventory of the sharps using the Sharps Inventory form on the TMC website. Let your consultant know if you need any assistance. Employers must consider product technological innovations, design and appropriateness to the procedures performed when considering a new safety device. Employees must be trained on the use of any new safety device implemented. Safety devices are required to be in use when available and when appropriate.
- 2 - Employers must implement and enforce work practice controls and update their exposure control plans annually to ensure that the best technology is being considered and used. This would include following the standards for the use of sharps containers, transporting contaminated instruments and the use of needleless systems. Employers are required to train employees on any new work practice control implemented.

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- 3 - Employers must solicit non-managerial input for the safer devices and practices considered for use. Simply deciding that one is not convenient or too costly is not an acceptable reason for not using a safety device and could result in an OSHA fine, or worse, a needlestick. Employers are required to document how they received input by their employees. (Annual Review Sharps Safety Program forms are available on the TMC website.
- 4 - Employers should maintain a record of sharps injuries. (Employee Incident Report and Sharps Injury Log forms are available on the TMC website.) Employee sharps injury records must be maintained in a manner that protects the privacy of employees and should not be kept in the OSHA manual. Reviewing injury reports is a great way of assessing needs, use and ways sharps are handled in a facility.

For more information and resources, refer to:

- Your TMC consultant
- TMC website www.totalmedicalcompliance.com
- OSHA website: www.osha.gov/SLIC/bloodbornepathogens/evaluation.html
- CDC website: www.cdc.gov/niosh/stopsticks Stop Sticks Campaign



What does this pictogram stand for?

Is everyone in your practice current on the United Nations Globally Harmonized System of pictograms that communicate hazardous chemicals? Each month we will print a GHS pictogram. If you can identify it correctly, you will be entered in a drawing to win a cash gift card. At the end of the year we will have one big drawing for the grand prize! Don't wait! [Click Here](#) to enter by September 30th for your chance to win!

Last month our pictogram was Oxidizing Liquids. Many got it right, but we had to pick only one winner and it was Stephanie S. of Georgia. Congratulations Stephanie!

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PROTECT YOURSELF

Most of us interact with wireless technology (i.e. Wi-Fi) on a daily basis, whether at work, at home, or at the coffee shop. Here are some tips to help protect yourself and your devices while using Wi-Fi networks.

- Be sure that all of your devices are configured to automatically install patches. This includes laptops, tablets, phones, home wireless equipment, game consoles, televisions and any other wireless devices in your home.
- If you pay your internet provider or landlord to provide your wireless networking, ask them for guidance on how to best secure your network. This should include rebooting the networking device on occasion.
- All of the communications from your devices, whether wirelessly or via wires, should utilize encrypted protocols. Today's most common applications are web-based. To ensure encryption for web-based applications verify that the address begins with HTTPS. S is for secured.
- Consider using a guest wireless network at home or in the office. Most wireless routers will support multiple networks. Create a secure, password protected network for devices you trust such as laptops and printers. Create a second open network for untrusted devices including televisions and smart home devices such as thermostats or refrigerators (yes, Internet-enabled refrigerators are a thing). Added bonus – you can allow guests on this network without having to give them a password.

The above content was brought to you by North Wonders (www.NorthWonders.com). They offer security awareness programs that significantly reduce the risk of ransomware, phishing, and compromised bank credentials – helping protect clinical data, patient personal information and your business assets.

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INFECTION CONTROL



THE BUGS OF FALL

Anyone remember the song *The Boys of Summer* by Don Henley? We are going to move away from our summer jaunts to focus on the Bugs of Fall. It is that time of year again! Cooler nights, shorter days, kids back at school and infections and infestations that come with Fall.

Influenza

The CDC reports that the 2017-2018 season was one of the worst flu seasons on record. The full report is available on the CDC [website](#), but here are some of the highlights of the report.

- The 2017-2018 influenza season was a high severity season with high levels of outpatient clinic and emergency department visits for influenza-like illness (ILI), and high influenza-related hospitalization rates.
- It was the first season to be classified as high severity across all age groups.
- As of the end of August, 180 pediatric deaths had been reported. This number exceeds the previously highest number of 171 for flu-associated deaths in children during a regular flu season.
- Approximately 80% of these deaths occurred in children who had not received a flu vaccination this season.

It is very important to provide the flu shot and encourage workers to get it. Educate patients about the value and need for this protective measure. Don't forget the importance of hand hygiene, the use of masks, and surface disinfection in reducing the spread of infection. For detailed information about the vaccine for the upcoming season, visit the CDC's [Frequently Asked Questions](#) page.

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THE BUGS OF FALL

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Head Lice

These parasitic insects who live on human blood are usually found on the head around the hairline and behind the ears. Infestation most frequently occurs among children in childcare and in elementary schools along with those living in the home of the impacted child. Keep in mind that head lice move by crawling, as they cannot hop or fly and are spread through direct contact with the hair of the infested person. While uncommon, infestation can spread by contact with hats or scarves, or personal care items such as combs or brushes.

After diagnosis and treatment of an infested person in the practice or facility the following steps can be followed.

- Hard surfaces – Lice will not grow or survive on them, therefore there is no special treatment needed other than cleaning and surface disinfecting with an EPA approved hospital disinfectant.
- Clothing/Linens – Wash in hot water, and dry on high heat.
- Furniture/carpeting – Vacuum to remove any of the infested person's hair which may have viable nits attached.

Pertussis

This illness, also known as whooping cough, is a highly contagious respiratory disease caused by *Bordetella pertussis* and is spread by coughing and sneezing. It is estimated that a person with pertussis could infect up to 12 – 15 other people. Of course, vaccination is the best protection. Healthcare providers should receive a single dose of Tdap. This vaccination is important both to you and to patients you care for. Appropriate follow-up by a healthcare provider is indicated if exposed, even if you have received the vaccine.

When caring for patients who have any type of respiratory illness, [Respiratory Hygiene and Cough Etiquette](#) measures must be utilized, as well as appropriate surface disinfection after care.

Good bye Summer! We are ready for you Bugs of Fall!

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GETTING TO KNOW TMC EMPLOYEES

Here at TMC, we take pride in providing quality customer service to our clients with a personal touch. Aside from site visits from a consultant, most of our clients only know our staff as a voice on the phone or perhaps as an image on the screen during a webinar. In the last year, we've enjoyed showcasing some of our clients in our newsletter, and we thought it was time to turn the tables and let you get to know us. So, we took a cue from social media and passed out a "Getting to Know You" questionnaire to share with you. Who better to kick this off with than Bill Fivek, our Fearless Leader?!



Bill Fivek, President and CEO

Bill joined the company in 2005. Bill worked with Motorola for over 20 years in technology and customer service, prior to joining TMC. Bill has been a technical educator for over 27 years. He has given various technical presentations to diverse audiences worldwide.

1. What is your must-have or go-to morning beverage? Water
2. What is the most fun or unusual item you keep on your desk?
A brass bell from my grandmother
3. How far away from home is the farthest away you've ever been?
Greece
4. Where is your favorite place to listen to music? Running
5. What is the last movie you saw in a movie theatre?
Mission Impossible
6. What is the most daring thing you've ever done?
Bought a motorcycle
7. Do you (or would you) sing at Karaoke night? I have
8. Are you related (even distantly) to anyone famous? Charlemagne
9. What is your favorite holiday? Thanksgiving
10. Is your glass half-empty or half-full? Always half full

IT'S YOUR CALL

OSHA Situation:

What is the importance of a housekeeping schedule?

HIPAA Situation:

Our office has a cleaning service. Should they sign a business associate agreement?

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)

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INSTRUCTIONS

Print and post newsletter in office for staff review. Each member should sign this form when completed. Keep on file as proof of training on these topics.

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