OSCE checklist for community health nursing: sharps disposal

OSCE checklist for community health nursing: community sharps disposal keeps used needles out of household waste and protects the patient, family and visiting staff. Use this original practice checklist with your course guidance and supervised skills teaching.

Numbered practice steps

1. Confirm identity using the setting's required identifiers. Introduce yourself as a student, explain the task, obtain consent and perform hand hygiene before contact or equipment use.
2. Ask which sharps are used, who handles them and how disposal is arranged. Check the local collection pathway and the container supplied for this purpose.
3. Choose a stable container position close to the procedure, away from children, pets and food. Check the container is intact and not beyond its fill line.
4. Explain that used needles go directly into the sharps container. Do not recap, bend, break or remove a needle by hand to make it fit.
5. Demonstrate safe temporary closure and storage using an unused teaching container. Arrange replacement and collection before the current container becomes unsafe.
6. After a sharps injury, encourage gentle bleeding under running water, wash with soap and water, cover with a waterproof dressing and seek urgent exposure assessment. Do not scrub, suck or conceal the injury; report it and follow the exposure pathway.
7. Close by checking understanding, ensuring comfort and cleaning your hands and equipment as appropriate. Document findings and hand over any unresolved safety concern to the supervising practitioner.

Common omissions

An open container on the floor is accessible to children. A household bottle is not a substitute for the service container. Carrying an exposed needle across a room creates avoidable risk.

Try an original practice task

Talk through disposal after a simulated injection without handling a real needle. Include what the person should do if the container is full or collection has not arrived.

These steps support learning, rather than authorising independent treatment. Follow your school's task and local policy; ask for help when a decision exceeds your competence.

Related nursing practice

Return to community nursing OSCE practice or use the full checklist directory.

Common questions

Is this a school marking sheet?

No. This is an original learning checklist. Your school sets the task and assessment criteria.

Can I print this checklist?

Yes. Use the PDF download on this page for practice.

Sources

- NMC: The Code
- HSE: sharps injuries
- HSE: actions after a sharps injury

Checked 2026-11-13. Fees and rules change, so confirm them with the regulator before you book.