



Infrastructure Projects Southern Toolbox Talk

Hypodermic Needles

14 March 2016

Beware they bite!



A member of a Network Rail Works Delivery Team was renewing a lineside signalling cable. As the cable draw rod exited through the cable route, a member of the team put his hand down to retrieve the end and came into contact with a discarded hypodermic needle that was hidden in the leaves.

The needle punctured the individual's glove and came into contact with bare skin; however, it did not puncture the skin.

In this case, the use of gloves prevented a far more serious injury by stopping the needle from puncturing the skin.

What can I do?

- Be aware that sharps may present in your working environment
- Always wear the correct PPE; in particular boots and gloves
- Be especially vigilant if you can't see what you are doing with your hands
- If you see a sharps or signs of drug use, report it.
- Quarantine any sharps and the area it was found in – there may be more that you can't see
- Raise a Close Call even though no one was injured

What should I do if I am injured by a needle?

- Do not panic; gently squeeze the area around the wound to encourage bleeding
- Do not suck the wound; clean the wound under running water or cleansing wipes provided in first aid kits
- Cover the wound with a dry plaster or dressing
- Keep the needle that caused the injury in a safe place, it may be needed by the doctor
- Contact with a needle can cause infection or spread disease so always seek medical advice and treatment immediately

What are sharps and where can they be found?

Sharps' is the generic term for Hypodermic needles and syringes. Sharps have been found in salt bins, bags of rubbish on track, under bridges, station areas, station toilets, rubbish bins, litter bins on trains and even inside cigarette packets or drinks containers.



For example: An individual found a syringe needle sticking in the sole of his safety boot. He thought that this had occurred at Victoria Station.

His boots were in good condition, with a steel sole plate. As a result, the needle did not penetrate through the boot to his skin.

