

Dear Colleague

## HEALTH AND SAFETY (SHARP INSTRUMENTS IN HEALTH) REGULATIONS 2013

1. This letter is to advise you of the introduction of the Health and Safety (Sharp Instruments in Healthcare) Regulations 2013 which come into force on 11 May 2013.

2. The "Sharps Regulations" are necessary in order to implement aspects of the European Council Directive 2010/32/EU that are not specifically addressed in existing GB legislation. They will supplement the existing health and safety legislation that requires employers across all sectors to take effective action to control the risk from sharps injuries.

3. Sharps injuries are a well-known risk in the healthcare sector. Sharps contaminated with an infected patient's blood can transmit pathogens that cause more than 20 diseases, including hepatitis B, C, viruses and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

4. Under existing health and safety law all employers are required to ensure that risks from sharps injuries are adequately assessed and appropriate control measures are in place. The Sharps Regulations build on the existing law and provide specific detail on requirements and measures that must be taken by healthcare employers and their contractors.

5. The Sharps Regulations apply to employers and contractors working in the healthcare sector and require them to:

- Have effective arrangements in place for the safe use and disposal of medical sharps.
- Provide the necessary information and training to workers.
- Investigate and take action in response to work related sharps injuries.

From the Chief Medical Officer  
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Director Health Workforce and  
Performance  
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### Addresses

#### For Action

NHS Health Board Chief Executives  
NHS Special Boards Chief Executives  
NHS Board Occupational Health  
Directors  
NHS Board Medical Directors  
NHS Board Directors of Public Health  
NHS Board Nurse Directors  
NHS Board AHP Directors  
NHS Board Pharmacy Directors  
NHS Board Dental Lead Officers

#### For Information

NHS Board Chairs  
NHS Board Finance Directors  
NHS Board HR Directors  
NHS Board Procurement Directors  
Members of Scottish Partnership  
Forum  
Members of Scottish Workforce and  
Governance Group

6. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) have issued an information notice on the new regulations. This can be found at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/hsis7.pdf> It is advised that this is read in conjunction with the new regulations. The regulations are available at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/645/contents/made>

### **Action Required**

7. In implementing the new regulations please ensure that all staff involved in the use of sharps and related areas of work, including GPs and Community Health Partnerships, are made fully aware any the changes that may impact on their duties. As appropriate review existing practice and procedures and, if applicable, arrange any specific staff training that may appropriate to enable compliance with the regulations.

Yours sincerely

*Harry Burns*

*Ros Moore*

*John Connaghan*

**SIR HARRY BURNS**  
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**ROS MOORE**  
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