PURPOSE:

- The main purpose of engineered sharps safety is to increase protection from sharps injuries, which can transmit HIV, hepatitis B, hepatitis C and other bloodborne pathogens. This is accomplished by stronger requirements for employers to use needles and other sharps which are engineered to reduce the chances of inadvertent needle sticks or other sharps injuries.

- Also required is for employers to keep a sharps injury log, which records the date and time of each sharps injury, as well as the type and brand of device involved in the exposure incident, the task being done when the injury occurred and whether the injury occurred before, during or after the task was performed. See Sharps Injury Log Form.

DEFINITIONS:

- Sharp:
    - Any object that can reasonably be anticipated to penetrate the skin or other parts of the body, such as needle devices, scalpels, lancets, etc. Other items that are not sharp, but could be if broken, are included, such as glass objects and capillary tubes.
        - Contaminated needles or sharps are not to be bent, sheared, broken, recapped or removed. Recapping, bending or removing needles is permissible **only** if there is no feasible alternative or if required for a specific medical procedure, such as blood gas analysis. If recapping, bending or removal is necessary, a mechanical device or one-handed technique must be utilized. If recapping is essential, i.e., between multiple injections for the same patient, employees may **never** use both hands to recap. Employees may recap with a one-handed "scoop" technique, using the needle itself to pick up the cap, pushing cap and sharp together against a hard surface to ensure a tight fit. Or employees may use a mechanical device, such as tongs or forceps, to hold the cap and place it on the needle.

- Blunt-tip Suture Needles:
    - FDA regulated suture needle that is not as sharp as standard (sharp-tip) suture needles and are designed to penetrate muscle and fascia and reduce the risk of needle sticks.

- Engineered Sharps Injury Prevention Device:

- A non-needle sharp or a needle device used for withdrawing body fluids, accessing a vein or artery, or administering medications or other fluids, with a built-in safety feature or mechanism that effectively reduces the risk of an exposure incident

- Sharps Injury:
  - Any injury caused by a sharp, including but not limited to, needle sticks, cuts or abrasions

- Medical Procedures Requiring Safety Devices:
  - Accessing a vein or artery
  - Withdrawal of body fluids
  - Administration of medications or fluids
  - Any procedure involving the potential for an exposure incident for which a needle device with engineered sharps injury protection is available

PLAN CRITERIA:

- The FDA suggests the following criteria be used in the selection of safety devices:
  - The safety feature should provide a barrier between the hand and the needle after use.
  - The safety feature should allow or require the worker's hands to remain behind the needle at all times.
  - The safety feature should be an integral part of the device and not an accessory.
  - Safety features should be in effect before disassembly and remain in effect after disposal, to protect workers who may subsequently handle the device.
  - The device should be simple and easy to use, requiring little or no training.

- In order to ensure effectiveness, education and evaluation of new safety devices and engineering controls will be an ongoing practice.
- Sharps Injury Log:

- A Sharps Injury Log for the documentation of percutaneous injuries from contaminated sharps shall be maintained by the Clinical Supervisor
- The confidentiality of the staff member shall be protected.