




Source	Hazard	Comment
Scalpels, knives and other blades	 DANGER	Cuts and puncture wounds can lead to infection, especially if the blade or point is contaminated by contact with living or once-living material. Careless use and handling of scalpels, syringes with needles, seekers and other sharps can lead to cuts and puncture wounds.
Syringe needles	 DANGER	Sharp scalpels are safer to use than blunt ones because there is less risk of them slipping as less force needs to be used.
Seekers and other sharps	 DANGER	Carrying scalpels, syringes with needles, seekers and other sharps especially in crowded rooms, can present a hazard to the user and others. Carelessly-disposed sharps can present a hazard to waste handlers and others.

Typical control measures to reduce risk

- Find out from a reliable source if there any health & safety issues relating to to the material being dissected.
- Cut in a direction away from yourself and where possible cut using a cutting board, dissection tray, a pad or similar.
- Wear eye protection when changing scalpel blades or cutting material likely to “flick” (eg, cartilage or bone).
- Cooperate with any requirement to count sharps at the beginning and end of a lesson.
- Carry sharps with the blade or point protected, eg in a shallow tray, and do not carry them at all if you are likely to be jostled.
- Dispose of used sharps in a proper, safe container, eg a sturdy box, clearly labelled, and sealed and wrapped before disposal.

Assessing the risks

- **What are the details of the activity to be undertaken? What are the hazards?**
- **What is the chance of something going wrong?**
eg, could the user or somebody else be cut or stabbed by accident?
- **How serious would it be if something did go wrong?**
- **How can the risk(s) be controlled for this activity?**
eg, can it be done safely? Does the procedure need to be altered?

Emergency action

- **Minor cuts** Wash the wound. Get the casualty to apply a small, sterilised dressing.
- **Severe cuts** Lower the casualty to the floor. Raise the wound as high as possible. If feasible, ask the casualty to apply pressure on or as close to the cut as possible, using fingers, a pad of cloth or, better, a sterile dressing (adding further layers as necessary). If the casualty is unable to do so, apply pressure yourself, protecting your skin and clothes from contamination by blood if possible. Leave any embedded large bodies and press around them. Consult a medic.