



SAFETY ALERT

Hand Laceration

RISK MANAGEMENT & SAFETY

Event: Hand Laceration
Date: September 2014
Category: Injury/Laceration
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Contact RMS:

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Description:

A researcher was cut by a broken Pasteur pipette that was contaminated with human cancer cells. She reported to the Wellness Center the next day and was tested for Hepatitis B and HIV.

The researcher was discarding cell culture medium from a tube using a Pasteur pipette. The pipette broke as the researcher was drawing the pipette out of the tube.

Findings:

- Researcher was wearing nitrile gloves.
- Researcher had completed the task many times.
- The delay in reporting to the Wellness Center was due to an experiment that had to be completed.

Root Cause:

The researcher was distracted from performing this task repeatedly throughout the day and did not pull the Pasteur pipette far enough out from the sample tube. While moving the pipette, it struck the tube and broke. The broken end of the pipette punctured the glove resulting in a laceration.

Recommended Actions:

- Provide instruction to seek medical treatment immediately but no longer than 2 hours after an exposure to any blood borne pathogen (human cell line, cultures, blood, etc.)
- Develop administrative controls such as taking breaks during the task to assist in maintaining concentration. Train personnel on the procedure.