

# SAFETY MATTERS

## PREVENTING NEEDLESTICKS

Needles and sharps tossed into garbage or recycling can be dangerous for workers. Many MRFs [report seeing needles daily or several times a week](#). Follow these tips to reduce your risk.



Photo by [Diana Polekhina](#) on [Unsplash](#)

### 1. Know what to do when you see a needle

When you see a needle, follow the employer's protocol. This might include stopping the line and notifying a trained supervisor to remove it. If no protocol exists for what to do when you see a needle, ask that one be developed.

### 2. Use Proper PPE

Always use required personal protective equipment (PPE) when on the job, including gloves and other protective body clothing.

### 3. Have a plan for needlesticks

If you get stuck by a needle or sharps:

- Wash needlesticks and cuts with soap and water
- Immediately seek medical treatment
- Report the incident to your supervisor

### 4. Consider changing facility operations or equipment

To prevent needles from making it onto the line or being handled, consider pre-sort inspections or using a bag breaker, especially for loads prone to containing needles.

For more #SWANAsafety info and resources visit [SWANA.org/safety](https://www.swana.org/safety)