

## EXAMPLE ONLY – HFT Implementation Guideline

### Definitions

- **Sharp:** Other sharps include but are not limited to k-wires, sharp retractors, skin hooks, saw blades, and any other items that pose a high risk of injuring a team member during instrument passing.
- **Neutral zone:** The neutral or safe zone is a designated area on the sterile field where a sharp can be placed.
- **No touch technique:** A technique used to minimize the need to physically touch a suture needle or a scalpel blade from a package. Also known as “hands-free technique”.
- **Modified hands-free passing technique:** Scrub person places the sharp in the surgeon’s hand, surgeon/RNFA/Assistant returns the sharp to the designated Neutral Zone.
- **Strict hands-free passing technique:** Scrub person places the sharp in the designated Neutral Zone. Surgeon/RNFA/Assistant picks up the sharp from the Neutral Zone to use and places it back in the Neutral Zone

### References:

- AORN. (2014). Perioperative Standards and Recommended Practices.
- AORN. (2014). Sharps Safety Tool Kit: Sharps Safety in the OR.
- AST. (2013) Guideline Statement for the Implementation of the Neutral Zone in the Perioperative Environment.

### Sharps Safety Practices

- Use of the Neutral Zone is required when feasible
  - The ideal device for a neutral zone will be large enough to hold sharps and not easily tipped over.
  - Only one sharp in the neutral zone at a time.
  - Kidney basins are not to be used as a neutral zone device.
  - It is highly discouraged to place the neutral zone on the patient and should be avoided it at all possible.
    - Placing neutral zone on patient causes additional concerns such as the sharp potentially following into the patient or if the patient shifts due to breaking the sharp could fall onto the floor.
  - A limited hands free passing technique may be used when:
    - At the surgeon’s discretion when s/he cannot avert eyes from the surgical field to neutral zone safely.
    - Microscope or loupes are being used by the surgeon
  - Limited hands free passing still requires the use of a neutral zone to place the used sharp on. Due to limited visibility the neutral zone should be highly recognizable and bright colors are recommended.
  - When the surgeon is not safely able to use the neutral zone process, use of a modified neutral zone or limited hands free passing technique may be utilized.

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- The scrub person announces “sharp” or other agreed upon term, and places the sharp in the surgeon/RNFA/Assistant hand.
- The surgeon/RNFA/Assistant announces “sharp” or other agreed upon term, and returns the item to the designated neutral zone area.
  
- Communicate the use of the Neutral Zone at the Surgical Briefing
  - All surgical team members agree on the location of the Neutral Zone device and how the device will be used for this particular procedure/group of procedures.
  - All surgical team members discuss how they will be safe in passing sharps.
  
- Do not bend, break, or re-cap contaminated needles.
  - If re-capping is required, use a one-handed scoop technique.
  - The Soffzone Syringe Tray allows for one handed re-capping