



Safety Alert

Sharps sticking upright

7 June 2021

The following pages of this safety alert were issued by Highways England's supply chain partner:

Ringway

Internal Safety Alert

Ringway South West M&R

Date 03/06/2021

Time 13.11pm

Location 251/9 S/B M5



A maintenance crew were tasked with routine vegetation clearance of comms steps. A near miss was reported with regards to a syringe needle that had been stuck (with chewing gum) to a handrail, pointing upwards. The handrail leads down to a comms box out on the network.

As you can see from the pictures, the hazard was placed with the intention to cause harm to anyone using the handrail by coming into contact with the exposed needle, which if used, could have caused the risk of transmitting blood borne diseases such as Hepatitis B and C, Syphilis and Aids to name a few.

To avoid any potential incidents; management, need to discuss safe working procedures with the aid of briefings and risk assessments.

Should an incident occur out on the network, regarding needles, the IP needs to seek medical advice immediately from their nearest Accident and Emergency department.

Managers responsibility is to -

- Ensure all operatives have sharps awareness briefing.
- Ensure appropriate training is up to date (if ops have needles and sharps training).
- Carry out a specific briefing for day and night shift, as part of the five minutes of safety briefing.