Improving Worker Safety: Understanding Needlesticks at Material Recovery Facilities

An estimated 7.8 billion injections occur outside of healthcare facilities annually\(^1\) with 95% of needles discarded unprotected in MSW streams\(^2\).

97% of MRFs who responded to the study survey reported seeing needles or syringes at least once per year.

Of the 103 reported needle-related events, 55% resulted in a needlestick injury. In the remainder, the needle stuck to PPE without injury.

EREF estimates a needlestick injury rate of 2.7 per 100 FTE.

MRF picking line workers experience the highest number of incidences at a rate of 3.9 per 100 FTE.

Compared to a total MRF injury and illness rate of 6 per 100 FTE\(^3\), this suggests 45% of MRF incidents could be needlesticks.

Injuries to MRF workers could result in up to $2.25 MILLION in direct costs for medical care.

The final report is available at erefdn.org

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\(^1\)Coalition for Safe Community Needle Disposal
\(^2\)UltiMed
\(^3\)Bureau of Labor Statistics

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