

WORKING SAFELY WITH AMPULES

AMPULE FACTS

- Ampules are hermetically sealed glass vessels containing pharmaceuticals or chemicals that must be protected from air and contaminants.
- They typically have a narrow neck between a cylindrical body and conical top.
- They are opened by snapping off the top at the neck, which can produce glass chips and a jagged or sharp edge.

HAZARDS OF AMPULES

- Sharp edges can cause minor cuts or more serious lacerations involving damage to nerves or tendons in the hand.
- Flying glass chips can enter the eye or drop back into the ampule.
- In some cases, there can be employee exposure to the contents of the ampule, which could include hazardous chemicals or drugs.

SAFE WORK PRACTICES

- Avoid ordering chemicals or pharmaceuticals packaged in ampules.
- Use reusable or disposable **ampule breakers**, which cover the ampule neck during the breaking process, to eliminate the need for heavy gloves, paper towels, or gauze.
- If ampule breakers are not available, use thick gloves (e.g., leather) and/or paper towels or other suitable protective padding for breaking (where sterility is not an issue).
- To preserve sterility, wear exam gloves and use alcohol wipes with sterile gauze or other protective padding to protect the hands.
- Wear safety glasses to protect the eyes from flying glass.
- Call OESO at 684-5996 with questions.



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