HAZARD ALERT

Subject: Biohazard Exposure
Incident Date: July 5, 2017

Incident summary
A worker was tasked with disposing of biohazard waste from the laboratory. The worker noticed that the waste contained needles and was incorrectly placed in a clear, plastic autoclave bag rather than a yellow biomedical waste container. The worker was new to this task and tried to confirm the correct procedure with another member of the lab. The worker did not receive close supervision for the task. While transferring the waste into a yellow container, the worker sustained a needle stick injury involving a biohazard exposure. After receiving first aid treatment, there was a period of confusion among lab personnel before the worker was advised to immediately proceed to the nearest emergency room for assessment by a physician.

Injuries and equipment damage
The worker received first aid treatment at the time of the exposure and subsequently received a medical assessment.

Immediate and root cause(s):
1. Procedures were not followed for proper biohazard waste disposal.
2. Laboratory procedures were not enforced.
3. Supervision was insufficient.

What should you do to prevent this type of incident?
1. Encourage workers to raise safety concerns that they may have.
2. Ensure laboratory procedures are enforced.
3. Ensure workers are adequately supervised based on their experience and competency.
4. Ensure workers are familiar with the Post-Exposure Protocol for Biological Hazards.