

Skin Penetration - Fact Sheet

"TATTOOING"

Introduction:

Tattooing is an age old art. It requires specific knowledge and understanding of the equipment and procedures. It also requires knowledge of infection control techniques and minimum hygiene standards. The following are recommendations that will help to achieve this.

Premises:

- All skin penetration premises must be registered with the local council. The register is to be made available for public viewing
- The premises must be in a clean and hygienic condition at all times
- A hand basin with hot and cold running water is required in the premises and is recommended to be in the treatment area
- Soap or other hand cleaning substance is required to be at the hand basin.
- Paper towel or other single use hand drying equipment is required to be at the hand basin
- The construction of the premises should meet with local council requirements
- The finish on all surfaces within the piercing area should be made of materials that are easily cleaned
- Fittings in the piercing area such as benches should be cleaned between each client and/ or a clean covering placed over the treatment surface
- Adequate lighting is recommended

Personal Hygiene:

- Tattooists must wash their hands before and after attending a client
- A clean gown or apron must be worn while tattooing
- If a tattooist has a cut or open wound on their hands or fingers especially, they must cover it with a waterproof dressing
- When tattooing, single use gloves must be worn

Equipment:

- Equipment must be cleaned between uses
 - Equipment that penetrates the skin must be **sterilised** before it is used and it must be maintained in a sterile and clean condition
 - Details of sterilisation must be recorded
 - It is recommended that the date of sterilisation be put on autoclave bags after sterilisation is complete. Bags must not be punctured
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- Where possible use single use equipment such as disposable razors. These items should be disposed immediately after use

- Spray bottles must be covered with disposable plastic covers

Procedures:

- **It is illegal** to tattoo a person under the age of 18 years without written parental or guardian approval advising of the type of tattoo and the location. Under age tattooing should be reported to the Department of Community Services
- A person giving a tattoo should have adequate knowledge about all the procedures. Management of needle stick injuries, blood spills and first aid knowledge is also recommended
- All necessary equipment should be set up just prior to starting the tattoo
- The skin to be tattooed should be cleaned with a skin antiseptic
- Stencils should not be reused
- A single use applicator should be used to dispense enough lubricant for one person
- All equipment that penetrates the skin must be sterilised
- Sterile packaging should only be opened when ready to tattoo
- The sterile part of the equipment that penetrates the skin should not be handled. If handling the equipment is unavoidable then sterile gloves must be worn. Single use gloves are not sterilised unless specified
- Dyes or inks should be dispensed into single use containers
- If the procedure is interrupted, gloves should be removed, hands washed and new gloves put on

After Treatment:

- Single use gloves should be disposed of immediately after the procedure
- **ALL** equipment should be cleaned after a procedure
- Single use equipment must be disposed of after use. Disposable ink caps and remaining ink must be thrown away
- Single use sharps must be disposed of into a sharps container
- Re-useable sharps must be sterilised before reuse
- Details of the sterilisation of equipment must be recorded
- All waste should be bagged appropriately and disposed daily. **It is illegal for sharps or other clinical waste to be disposed of in the general waste stream**
- After care instructions must be provided to the client such as cleaning the site, infections and what to look for, and healing times

For further information on this or other publications about skin penetration, contact your local council or public health unit.

For details on the legislative requirements for skin penetration procedures and best practice techniques refer to the 'Guidelines for Skin Penetration - 2001' and the 'Code of Best Practice for Skin Penetration Operators' respectively.

These publications are available from your local council, Public Health Units, the Better Health Centre on 9816 0452 or the NSW Health web site www.health.nsw.gov.au