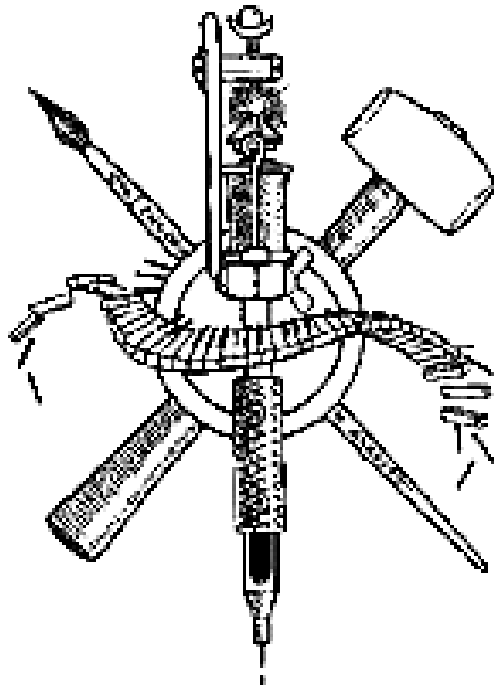


STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

FOR

**TATTOOING, BODY PIERCING,
AND PERMANENT COSMETICS**



Standards of Practice for Tattooing, Body Piercing and Permanent Cosmetics

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1. Introduction

Successful personal service businesses supply their clients with professionally competent, safe and hygienic services, provided in clean and congenial premises.

Proprietors of these services must become aware of the possible wider effects of the procedures they employ. Unsafe or unhygienic procedures can not only affect the health of the client but also jeopardize the health of the operator and aid the spread of infectious diseases. More seriously, where procedures involving penetration of the skin are not performed correctly, they can be the means of transmitting organisms that cause diseases like AIDS, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C. It is essential for proprietors to be fully aware of the potential dangers of their procedures and to understand the precautions that need to be taken to minimize the likelihood of infection.

The following basic principles must be observed by people operating in establishments that provide personal tattoo, permanent cosmetic, and body piercing services:

- The premises must be kept clean and hygienic.
- Any article to be used for penetrating the skin must be sterile.
- Any article that has penetrated the skin or is contaminated with blood must be either disposed of immediately or sterilized before being used on another person.
- Any other article to be used on a person must be sanitized before being used on another person.
- Operators must keep themselves and their clothing clean and have no exposed cuts, abrasions or wounds.

2. How Infections Can Occur

The potential for serious infection occurs during tattooing and body piercing. The needles that are used to penetrate the skin at various sites on the body can become contaminated by blood or serum.

HIV (the virus which causes AIDS), Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C viruses are present in blood and spread by infected blood entering another person's bloodstream. This can happen during tattooing or body piercing, when needles used for penetrating the skin are contaminated with infected blood or serum and are not sterilized before use on another person.

The person at risk may be the next client being treated with the contaminated instrument or you, if you accidentally penetrate your skin with the contaminated instrument. This is called a 'needle-stick' injury. Contact with infected blood, serum or contaminated instruments on open cuts, sores or broken skin can also lead to infection.

Blood or serum does not have to be visible on an instrument needle for infection to be transmitted. It is important to note: **all instruments that penetrate the skin of a person, including needles and attachments such as nozzles, needle bars and tubes, must be sterile.**

2.1 Cross-Contamination

Some of the ways which cross-contamination can occur in tattoo and body piercing shops are as follows:

- If one or more operators share the same equipment and materials.
- If used and clean instruments come into contact with one another.
- If clean instruments are placed on unclean surfaces.
- If strict operator hygiene is not observed.
- If contaminated dressings, spatulas, disposable gloves are not disposed of immediately and appropriately after use.
- If structural facilities, furnishings and fittings of the premises are not adequately protected, or thoroughly cleaned between clients.
- If towels and other articles used on clients are not changed or thoroughly cleaned between clients.

Operators should be aware of the potential for unprotected surfaces and equipment to become contaminated with blood and serum during tattooing or body piercing. Some examples of how this can occur are as follows:

- Adjusting overhead light fittings.
- Adjusting settings on power packs.
- Answering telephones.
- Touching ink bottles or ink trays.
- Touching curtains, drapes or bin lids.
- Adjusting furniture and equipment. Clients, operators and the community can be at risk if cross-contamination occurs.

2.2 Health and Safety in the Workplace

Employers have a responsibility to provide a safe work environment without risks to the health of their employees, clients or other persons who go onto their premises. In the tattoo and body piercing industry, this safety involves the provision of:

- Adequate staff training, including hygiene and infection control.
- Properly maintained facilities and equipment, including provision of protective equipment such as gloves.
- A clean and suitably designed shop, to include the storage of goods such as chemicals to minimize potential hazards.

2.2.1 Hepatitis B Vaccination

A safe and effective vaccine for the prevention of Hepatitis B is available. Vaccination is advised for all tattooists, body piercers and staff involved in skin penetration procedures and for staff who may be involved in cleaning skin penetration instruments and equipment. A primary vaccination course usually consists of three injections over six months. At the end of this time, a blood test can be done to check that the vaccination has been effective. It is recommended that booster doses be given five to seven years after the primary course. Vaccination and blood tests can be arranged through a local doctor.

2.2.2 Contact with Blood or Body Fluids

Because of the risk of blood borne infection, operators and clients should avoid contact with other peoples' blood and body fluids. If contact occurs, the following precautions should be taken:

- Wash the area of contact thoroughly with soap and warm water. If contact has been with an open wound, broken skin, mucous membrane (mouth, eyes) or penetrating needle-stick injury.
- Irrigate the area with water in the case of contact with a mucous membrane.
- Encourage bleeding from the wound, and in the case of open wounds and broken skin wash the area thoroughly with soap and water.
- Report the contact to your local doctor who will give you advice.
- In the case of a penetrating needle-stick injury, refer to appendix C.

2.2.3 Bleeding

Should bleeding occur at any time in the course of a tattooing or body piercing procedure or accidentally, the following procedures should be followed:

- Put on disposable gloves if you are not already wearing them.
- Stop the bleeding by applying pressure to the wound with a dry sterile disposable dressing.
- Handle disposable dressings and contaminated instruments carefully to avoid contact with blood or serum from the client or the instrument.
- Dispose of contaminated instruments into a sharps container or clean and sterilize the instruments.
- Clean surfaces such as benches, chairs or floors that have become contaminated with blood or other body fluids as soon as possible, using a disposable cloth soaked in diluted bleach at 1:4 dilution.
- Wash affected areas with hot water and detergent and dry them with a clean disposable wipe.
- Disinfect the surface with diluted bleach and leave for a minimum of fifteen minutes before wiping dry.
- After treating wounds, handling contaminated dressings or cleaning up blood or other body fluids, remove both gloves, dispose of them and wash hands thoroughly.

Note: to prepare 1:4 dilution of bleach, see section 3.7.1.

3. Tattooing/Body Piercing

3.1 Preparation of Work Area and Setting up of Equipment

It is very important that you prepare the work area so as to avoid having to leave the client in the middle of a tattooing or body piercing procedure to get something which may be needed. This increases the risk of cross-contaminating surfaces.

- Ensure that the work area is clean and tidy.

- Make sure all the items needed are in easy reach and that any items not required are removed from the immediate area.
- Cover any work surfaces with disposable coverings or clean linen (this makes cleaning the work surfaces easier).
- Place a container labeled 'dirty instruments for sterilizing' in the work area for the collection of these instruments.

Hands must be washed thoroughly according to the procedure outlined in section 5 and disposable gloves should be worn.

Packages containing sterile needles should be opened in front of the client to show that sterile instruments are being used.

To prevent surfaces from being contaminated in the event that an item has to be handled or adjusted while tattooing is in progress:

- Cover spray-bottles and ink bottles with single-use plastic bags, so that only the nozzles are exposed.
- Cover any surfaces which may need to be touched, for example light fittings and power pack controls, with cling film.
- Place the required number of single-use, disposable ink caps into stainless steel ink cap trays and dispense inks into ink caps. Alternatively, dispense inks onto a single-use, disposable tray. Any left over ink must be discarded with the container, after each client.
- Place water to be used for rinsing between colors in disposable cups and dispose of the water and cups after each client.
- Tissues or wipes to be used during tattoo procedures should be stored where they cannot become contaminated. Enough wipes to be used on one client should be kept in the working area and any not used should be immediately discarded after each client.
- Solder sterile needles onto the sterile needle bars using a lead free solder and then clean them to remove any flux residue. After soldering they must then be re-sterilized in the autoclave according to section 3.5 and Appendix A, prior to being used on a client.
- Wash hands thoroughly according to section 5.1 and wear disposable latex gloves.
- Open autoclave bags containing sterile needles, needle bars and tubes, and set up the tattoo machine in front of the client to show that sterile instruments are being used.

Additional Precautions

- Replace any sterile instruments accidentally touched by you or contaminated in any other way, either before or during a treatment, with another sterile instrument or needle.
- Take care when inspecting needles for defects such as damaged or blunt points. They must be cleaned and sterilized prior to inspection and then re-sterilized before they are used on a client.
- Needles must never be tested for sharpness on the operator's skin.

3.2 Skin Preparation

- The patient's skin should be clean and free from infection.
- If the area to be tattooed needs to be shaved, a disposable safety razor should be used. After use, the razor must be immediately disposed of into a sharps container.
- Prior to tattooing/body piercing, the skin around the site must be disinfected. For the area around the eyes the area should be cleansed with warm water. Skin can be disinfected using any of the following preparations:
 - 70 percent w/w ethyl alcohol,
 - 80 percent v/v ethyl alcohol,
 - 60 percent v/v isopropyl alcohol,
 - Alcoholic (isopropyl and ethyl) formulations of 0.5 to 4 percent w/v chlorhexidine,
 - Aqueous or alcoholic povidone-iodine (1 percent w/v available iodine).

These can be applied to the skin using a spray-bottle or pump pack and wiping with a clean disposable cloth. Alternatively, skin disinfectants may be decanted from their original container into a single-use container. At the end of tattooing/body piercing each client, any remaining fluid, single-use container and disposable cloth must be discarded with the container.

Alcohols in the form of sterile, disposable swabs may also be used to disinfect the skin. Use-by dates on disinfectants must be observed. The time between skin preparation and skin penetration should be at least two minutes but preferably five minutes.

In tattooing:

- A detergent-based lotion containing one of the above anti-bacterial preparations may be used on the skin prior to placement of a stencil. The application of this lotion onto the skin should be the same as for anti-bacterial skin cleansers. Multiple-use deodorants should never be used prior to the placement of a stencil.
- Because of the high risk of cross-contamination with blood, it is important that stencils are not re-used on other clients.
- Before tattooing, the client's skin may be covered with lubricating jelly. It is important that the jelly be removed from the original container using a clean single-use applicator. If extra jelly is required on the client, a new spatula should be used each time. Because of the high risk of cross-contamination of the pump outlet, self-dispensing pumps for lubricating jelly should be used only to dispense onto a clean single-use applicator. Under no circumstances should petroleum jelly be removed from a container using gloves or bare fingers. Any left-over jelly must not be returned to the original container and must not be used on another client.

3.3 Cleaning of Work Area after Tattooing

After the completion of each tattoo session on a client, the following procedure should be carried out:

1. Dismantle tubes, needles and needle bars from the tattoo machine and place them into a puncture resistant autoclavable container with a lid, immediately after

- completing the treatment. This container should be labeled 'dirty instruments for sterilization and be used only for this purpose.
2. Apply anti-bacterial lotions or creams to the treated area of the skin, if necessary remove disposable gloves and dispose of them into the waste bin.
 3. A suitable anti-bacterial skin cleanser such as those listed in section 3.2 may be used on the area of the skin where the tattoo has been applied. This can also be used on the tattoo during the tattooing procedure.
 4. Wash hands thoroughly as described in section 5.1.
 5. A clean sterile dressing should be applied over the completed tattoo.
 6. Advice should be given to each client on how to care for their tattoo and how to prevent infection from occurring.
 7. Move dirty instruments to the cleaning area of your shop and, as soon as possible, clean and sterilize them according to the procedures described in sections 3.5, 3.6 and Appendix A.
 8. Remove disposable needles and re-useable needles that are to be disposed of from the needle bar and dispose of the needles immediately into a sharps container.
 9. Place other dirty articles which do not require sterilization in the cleaning area and clean them as soon as possible. Note - Do not store instruments or needles in disinfectant before or after cleaning.
 10. Dispose of all used single-use items, (other than sharps), such as spatulas, ink caps, used tissues and wipes, into the bin.
 11. Any linen used during a treatment should be placed in a dirty linen container and washed using the procedure outlined in this site. Use disposable cloths and protective coverings on surfaces when a skin penetration procedure is performed on a client.
- Additional Precautions:**
12. Remove the elastic bands from the tattoo machine and dispose of them into the waste bin.
 13. Clean the tattoo machine by first wiping with a clean dry swab, and then thoroughly wiping with clean cotton wool or a pad saturated with 70 percent w/w ethyl alcohol. Allow to air dry.
 14. Clean containers used for collecting dirty instruments.
 15. Clean and sterilize or dispose of ink cap trays.

3.3.1 Cleaning of Work Area after Body Piercing

After completing body piercing on a client, the following procedure should be carried out:

1. Place all used disposable instruments into a sharps container immediately after use.
2. Place all used re-useable instruments into a puncture resistant container with a lid immediately after completing the treatment. This container should be labeled "dirty instruments for sterilizing" and only be used for this purpose.
3. Apply anti-bacterial lotions or creams to the treated area of the skin, if necessary.
4. Remove your disposable gloves and dispose of them in the waste bin.
5. Wash your hands thoroughly as described in these guidelines.
6. A suitable anti-bacterial skin cleanser such as those listed in this site may be used on the area of the skin where the piercing has been done.

8. Advice should be given to each client on how to care for their tattoo/piercing and how to prevent infection from occurring.
9. Move dirty instruments to the cleaning area of your shop and clean and sterilize them according to the procedure in these guidelines as soon as possible.
10. If elastic bands are used on clamps, the elastic bands are to be removed and disposed of before the clamps are cleaned and sterilized. Place other dirty articles which do not require sterilization in the cleaning area and clean them as soon as possible. They must be kept separate from the instruments that require sterilization. **Note** - Do not store instruments or needles in disinfectant before or after cleaning.
11. Dispose of all used disposable items, other than sharps, such as spatulas, into the bin.
12. Any linen used during a treatment should be placed in a dirty linen container and washed using the procedure outlined in these guidelines. Use disposable cloths and protective coverings on surfaces, when a skin penetration procedure is performed on a client.

3.3.2 Cleaning Work Surfaces

After use by each client, the surfaces of chairs, couches and the like, as well as benches, tables and other working surfaces where there has been contact with the client's skin are to be: washed with warm water and detergent, and then dried with a clean disposable wipe; or covered with a clean towel; or covered with disposable paper.

Remove all protective coverings on surfaces and equipment, taking care not to contaminate the surfaces which have been protected. These coverings should be disposed of into the infectious waste bin. In addition to this, wash these surfaces with warm water and detergent and dry them with a clean disposable wipe at the end of each working day and when they become visibly soiled. If any surfaces have become contaminated with blood or any other body fluid, they are to be cleaned in accordance with section 2.2.3 on bleeding.

3.4 Cleaning Tattoo/Body Piercing Instruments Prior to Sterilization (and Any Instrument Contaminated with Blood or Serum)

As soon as possible after use, reusable instruments must undergo cleaning. This is a crucial first step prior to sterilization. Cleaning should take place in the cleaning area set aside for this purpose. New, re-useable needles and instruments need to be cleaned and sterilized before use, if they are not purchased pre-sterilized.

Wear thick, heavy duty rubber gloves when washing contaminated instruments. This makes handling them safer. Care must be taken at all times to prevent any penetration of the skin or splashing of mucous membranes (such as eyes) during the cleaning process.

Carefully rinse the item in warm running water. Hot water at this stage could thicken protein material and make it stick to the instrument. Cold water will harden fats making cleaning more difficult. Fully dismantle the instruments. Immerse instruments in hot water and detergent in a sink. While holding the instruments under the surface of the water, scrub the instruments with a heat disinfected (see below) clean brush. This step may be carried out using an ultrasonic cleaner. Ultrasonic cleaners work by subjecting instruments to high

frequency, high energy sound waves, causing soil to be dislodged from instruments and dropped to the bottom of the tank or be sufficiently loosened to be removed during the rinsing process:

- Rinse cleaned instruments in hot running water.
- Carefully dry instruments with a lint-free, single-use, disposable towel.
- Check the condition of the equipment.

Ultrasonic cleaners must be operated with the lid on to prevent any micro-organisms present in the cleaning solution from becoming airborne and contaminating surfaces in the shop. They must be operated and maintained according to the manufacturer's directions. It must be stressed that ultrasonic cleaners do not sterilize or disinfect instruments. However, they do provide a very safe and effective means of cleaning instruments prior to sterilization.

3.5 Sterilizing Tattoo/Body Piercing Instruments (and Any Instrument Contaminated with Blood or Serum)

Tattooing instruments which must be sterile before use are the tube, nozzle, needle, needle bar and any other instrument that has been contaminated with blood or serum. Instruments must be cleaned and sterilized before they are used on another client, and forceps used to handle sterile instruments must also be sterile. Effective sterilization depends on the following factors:

- **Cleanliness** - the articles to be sterilized must be thoroughly pre-cleaned to allow good contact on all surfaces to be sterilized.
- **Temperature** - the correct temperature must be maintained throughout the articles being sterilized.
- **Time** - the sterilizing temperature must be maintained for the correct period of time. The only method of sterilization appropriate is autoclaving. The procedure to sterilize instruments is outlined in appendix A. Sterilization cannot be achieved using microwave ovens, pressure cookers, ultraviolet cabinets, boiling water units, ultrasonic cleaners, and similar appliances. Wiping instruments with disinfectant prior to use does not sterilize them.

3.6 Cleaning of Other Instruments and Articles

All instruments and articles that are not intended to penetrate the skin, but that are used on clients, must be thoroughly cleaned before and after each use. Containers, including their lids, used for the storage of items and for the collection of dirty instruments, must also be thoroughly cleaned before and after each use. Follow this procedure with instruments and articles that can be immersed in water:

- Rinse in warm water.
- Thoroughly wash with hot water and soap or detergent using a good scrubbing action.
- Rinse in hot water and allow to dry.

- Store instruments in a clean, impervious, and covered container.
- Follow this procedure with instruments and articles that would be damaged if immersed in water, for example, the electrical handpiece: thoroughly wipe with clean cotton wool or a cotton pad saturated with 70 per cent w/w ethyl alcohol. Allow to dry naturally. Store clean instruments in a clean, impervious, covered container.
- Follow this procedure with garments and other washable fabrics: Wash with soap or detergent in hot water. Rinse and dry or have commercially laundered. Store items in a clean, appropriate area such as a cupboard or drawer.

3.7 Disinfectants - Should They Be Used?

With the exception of the use of 70 percent alcohol to cleanse instruments that would be damaged if immersed in water, all non-skin penetration instruments used in tattooing and body piercing procedures can be brought to a satisfactory level of freedom from micro-organisms if they are thoroughly cleansed in accordance with 'instruments that can be immersed in water' (section 3.6). The routine use of disinfectants, including glutaraldehyde is no longer recommended. Disinfecting solutions that have been used by many tattooists and body piercers in the past have been found to be ineffective, have not been used properly, or have been found to be inappropriate for use in the tattooing industry. All tattoo and body piercing instruments must be thoroughly cleaned and sterilized according to the procedure described in these guidelines.

Note: Under no circumstances should instruments be stored in disinfectants before or after cleaning or sterilizing.

3.7.1 Bleach

All references to 'bleach' throughout this site, relate to household grade bleach products.

To dilute bleach for a 1:4 dilution, add 1 cup of bleach (250 ml) to 3 cups of water (750 ml). Only dilute bleach on the same day it is to be used as its effectiveness deteriorates rapidly. To prevent deterioration, store bleach in dark, cool areas. Use-by dates on bleach products must be strictly adhered to. Wear gloves when handling bleach, as it can cause skin irritation. Take care to avoid bleach coming into contact with most metals as they can be easily rusted or corroded.

4. The Shop

4.1 General Requirements

The shop should be planned carefully to provide client treatment areas totally separate from areas set aside for cleaning and/or sterilizing equipment. In the areas where tattooing or body piercing is carried out and where instruments and equipment are cleaned, disinfected or sterilized, the floor, benches, shelving, fittings and furniture should be constructed of smooth impervious materials capable of being kept clean and in good repair. There should also be good lighting and ventilation throughout the premises. The cleaning area should be arranged so that dirty instruments are received in one area. All dirty instruments should be moved through the cleaning area in a one way direction so that sterile instruments, clean

instruments and dirty instruments remain separate from one another. There should be sufficient bench space to accommodate equipment.

4.2 Hand Basins

A hand basin with hot and cold running water supplied through a single outlet, plus liquid soap or detergent and disposable paper towels should be installed in the immediate area where tattooing or body piercing is carried out.

4.3 Sinks

A sink with cold and hot water additional to the hand basin should be provided exclusively for washing equipment and instruments and should be located in the cleaning area.

4.4 Linen

Clean, single-use, disposable covering material should be provided and changed between clients:

- On surfaces in the work areas where spillage or spattering of blood or body fluids is likely to occur.
- For the protection of the client and client's clothing.

Soiled protective clothing used by you, is to be placed into a suitable receptacle, such as a clothes basket, and then cleaned as described in these guidelines. All clean coverings and clothing are to be stored in an appropriate clean area such as a cupboard or drawer to prevent soiling or contamination. Only clean linen, garments, towels or paper strips are to be used or placed on clients.

4.5 Disposal of Sharps and Non-Infectious Waste

It is essential that infectious (sharps) wastes are properly segregated, packaged, labeled, handled and transported to minimize the risk of needle-stick injuries and the transmission of infectious diseases to waste handlers and the community.

For waste removal contractors, refer to the Yellow Pages under 'Waste Disposal - Medical and Infectious' or contact the Kings County Environmental Health Services at 584-1411, who can provide you with a list of permitted transporters of infectious waste. Sharps must be segregated from the solid waste stream as described below.

4.5.1 Sharps

To prevent accidents involving potential transmission of blood borne diseases such as HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C, sharps, such as needles, must be handled with care during procedures which involve their use. Dispose of used sharps into an approved red, rigid sharps container with the biohazard symbol located on the front immediately after use. The person who uses the disposable sharp instrument must be the person who places it into the sharp container. Do not forcefully insert items into the container or you may injure your

hand. Place multiple-use sharp instruments into the container at the end of their life. Place sharps containers in all areas where sharps are used. Take care where you place these containers so that children cannot reach them under any circumstances. Once the container reaches the full level, seal it and contact a licensed medical waste hauler for pickup.

4.5.2 Non-Infectious Solid Waste

All non-infectious wastes, papers, gloves and so on, should be placed into a suitable refuse receptacle as soon as practicable after treating each client and removed from inside the premises at least daily.

5. Staff Hygiene

Broken skin or infected exposed parts of the body must be kept covered with a dressing that completely covers the affected area. Rings should not be worn during tattooing, body piercing, cleaning or hand washing, whether gloves are worn when operating or not.

5.1 Hand Washing

Hand washing is the first step in any infection control program. The surface of hands and nails must be clean before any patient contact. Abrasions, cuts or lesions should be covered by a waterproof dressing, and it is recommended that a glove be worn. Wash hands:

- Before and after contact with each client.
- After contact with any blood or other body fluid.
- Immediately prior to wearing new disposable gloves and attending a client.
- Immediately after removing disposable gloves for any reason.
- After carrying out a treatment on a client.
- After handling a nasal tissue.
- After smoking.
- After going to the toilet.

How to wash hands:

- Use soap with warm running water.
- Rub hands vigorously during washing, (for a minimum of 15 seconds). Wash hands all over, including backs of hands, wrists, between fingers, under fingernails; and forearms up to the elbows. Use a nail brush on fingernails.
- Rinse your hands well.
- Thoroughly dry hands with a new, single-use, disposable paper.

6. Protective Wear for Staff

6.1 Gloves

Operators should always wear disposable gloves while carrying out tattoo or body piercing procedures and their hands should always be thoroughly washed immediately prior to wearing gloves and immediately after removing them. It is important that gloves are:

- Removed and disposed of before leaving a client for any reason.
- Disposed of if they become torn, contaminated with blood or are removed for any reason.
- Changed between attending clients.
- Never washed or re-used.

Wear heavy duty utility gloves while cleaning instruments prior to sterilization. These gloves may be re-used but they should be replaced if torn, cracked, peeling or showing signs of deterioration.

6.2 Clothing

Operators should wear a clean washable garment, such as an apron or a uniform, intended exclusively for use when attending clients. Protective clothing protects the wearer's clothing and the skin from contamination with blood.

7. How To Minimize Infections

Infection control is the process of minimizing the risks of spreading infections while providing tattooing and body piercing services to your clients. As proprietors of tattooing and/or body piercing businesses, you must balance the costs and the consequences of providing specific infection control procedures against the benefits that will result from their use. An example of this would be the decision to use only single-use, disposable needles. The higher cost associated with the use of disposable needles is insignificant compared with the reduced risks of passing on blood-borne infections not only to clients but to operators. A decision such as this must be considered as important as any insurance policies which the business may have.

The blood and body substances of all clients must always be treated as being potentially infectious, as it is impossible to determine if clients have HIV or other blood-borne viruses. Clients are not required to disclose this information.

7.1 Choice of Instruments, Needles and Jewelry

Deterioration of plated metal surfaces of equipment occurs as a result of repeated use, and as a result of repeated autoclave sterilization processes through drying in autoclave bags or pouches (unless the autoclave includes a drying cycle). Therefore, it is recommended that good quality stainless steel needles and instruments be used and maintained for use in tattooing and body piercing procedures. Pre-sterilized, single-use, disposable needles and instruments should be used wherever possible. These must be disposed of into sharps containers immediately after use. Under no circumstances should any item marked by its manufacturer as single use be cleaned and sterilized for re-use on another client.

Re-useable instruments that are used for penetration of the skin must be cleaned and sterilized for re-use on another client. Other instruments that have accidentally penetrated the skin or are contaminated with blood must be properly cleaned and sterilized before further use.

Body Piercing

Where the needle is to be passed through body tissue and out the other side, a sterile, no touch technique must be used. Ordinary disposable gloves are not sterile and therefore, touching any part of the needle means the needle is no longer sterile and should not be pulled through. In using this technique, sterile forceps should be used to handle the needle and sterile forceps must also be used to handle sterile jewelry. Alternatively, sterile disposable gloves should be worn when handling the needle. Care must be taken when putting on sterile gloves so that you do not contaminate them.

Piercing guns are only appropriate for use when piercing ears. These guns are liable to damage body tissue when used for piercing other parts of the body.

Needles should be pre-sterilized, single use and disposable. Other instruments used in body piercing which must be sterile are clamps, needle pushers, insertion tapers and any other instruments likely to come in contact with open tissue or be contaminated with blood or serum.

The most suitable forms of metal for body piercing are surgical steel and gold, as they can be effectively sterilized in the autoclave prior to piercing. Gemstone bead selection in bead rings should be based on materials that can be sterilized effectively in the autoclave. The use of gemstones, gold, and sterling silver beads in the bead ring are unsuitable for genital piercing, as the materials react with urine.

Other instruments that have accidentally penetrated the skin or may be contaminated with blood must be properly cleaned and sterilized before further use.

Cosmetic Tattooing

Cosmetic tattooing (permanent cosmetics) is also referred to as pigment implants, semi-permanent creations, permanent makeup, derma-impigmentation and micropigmentation. All these processes involve the same method of application as tattooing and are therefore subject to the same controls and procedures outlined in these standards. The instruments used are referred to as permanent cosmetic machines or devices and the needle chamber must be capable of being detached from the motor housing to enable thorough cleaning and sterilization. Only those devices that can be autoclaved are to be used.

7.2 Dispensing

To avoid cross-contamination, any fluid, cream, ointment or similar substance should be removed from its original container or tube only by the use of a clean single-use, disposable applicator. Because of the high risk of cross contamination of the pump outlet, self-

dispensing pumps for cream, ointment or similar substances should be used only to dispense onto a clean single-use, disposable applicator.

Any leftover cream, ointment or similar substance which has been removed from a container must not be returned to the original container and must not be used on another client. Any applicator used for dispensing a substance must not be re-dipped into the original container and must be disposed of after each use. Liquid soap dispensers and spray bottles should be cleaned before refilling and should not be topped up due to the risk of cross-contamination.

8. Record Keeping

It is important to keep accurate records of every client. These records should include name, address and the date the treatment was given. A record of work done would also be useful. These records will be valuable if there is any question of an infection problem later and may often help to protect you (for example if the incubation period is too long or too short for the infection to be transmitted to the customer as a result of a treatment given by you).

Appendix A: How To Sterilize Your Instruments

(i) Autoclaves

Ensure all people responsible for operating autoclaves are trained in their use. Specific instructions on the packing and the use of the autoclave should be displayed next to the machine. Autoclaves should be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Before autoclaving any item, make sure that it can be sterilized by this method and that it has been cleaned according to the procedure outlined in this site.

(ii) Packaging of Instruments Prior to Autoclaving

There are a number of self-sealing autoclave bag systems on the market which can be obtained from most surgical supply companies. The purpose of placing cleaned instruments into these bags for autoclaving is to protect the contents from becoming contaminated after sterilizing and to enable instruments to be more easily stored in a sterile condition. Sufficient instruments for use on one client should be packed in each bag. The packaged instruments must remain in the autoclave while the door is open slightly to allow them to dry and the packets must be completely dry before being removed from the autoclave. Autoclave bags are porous when they are wet and therefore, the instruments inside are liable to be contaminated if the bags are removed from the autoclave while they are still wet.

Only a small number of well-spaced (to allow adequate air circulation), sealed packets of instruments are to be placed in autoclaves which do not have a drying cycle. A chemical color indicator should be included on the autoclave bag to indicate those instruments that have been sterilized. Autoclave bags are to be used only once and then disposed of.

(iii) Loading Operating and Unloading the Autoclave.

When loading the autoclave, care needs to be taken to ensure that the air will be able to freely circulate around the articles to be sterilized and that all surfaces will be exposed to steam.

Ensure that the following recommended temperature pressure holding time is reached whenever the autoclave is used:

- Autoclave at a minimum of 121°C, at 103 KPa (15psi) for 15 minutes.
- Autoclave at a minimum of 126°C, at 138 KPa (20psi) for 10 minutes.
- Autoclave at a minimum of 134°C, at 206 KPa (30psi) for 3 minutes.

The times given here are only 'holding times' and do not include the time taken for the autoclave to reach the required temperature.

When unloading sterile instruments from the autoclave, care needs to be taken to avoid contaminating them. Items that have been dropped, torn, have broken seals or are wet are no longer sterile. Sterile instruments that are not wrapped, must be removed from the autoclave using sterile forceps.

Used, dirty instruments must never be stored near clean areas where sterilized instruments are unloaded from the autoclave.

(iv) Monitoring of the Sterilization Process.

There is clearly no point in using an autoclave, if it is not sterilizing properly. Using instruments that are believed to be sterile may place clients at a considerable risk of infection. Therefore, it is very important to monitor the sterilization process on a regular basis to ensure that the autoclave is working correctly.

Autoclaves must be fitted with gauges to measure time, temperature and pressure. During each use, these gauges must be viewed to ensure that the readings are correct (see above table) and these readings should also be recorded.

Chemical indicator strips (such as those on autoclave bags) are available to use in autoclaves to test for procedural errors and equipment malfunction. These strips however, only test physical characteristics of the autoclave such as temperature and pressure. Biological indicators need to be used to ensure that the sterilizing process is destroying all forms of microbial life. Biological indicators must be used during installation, testing and after repairs and must be used according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Autoclaves must be serviced at six monthly intervals to make sure that they are working correctly. Service records should be kept for information purposes.

(v) Storage of Sterilized Instruments

If there is a need to store sterile instruments, they must be stored in a condition so as to maintain their sterility. Sterile, packaged instruments must remain in the original, sealed, autoclave bag and be kept in a clean, dry, covered container until ready for use. Unpackaged, sterile instruments must be handled with sterile forceps and be stored in a sterile, covered container until ready for use.

Appendix B: Management of Needle-Stick Injury and Exposure to Blood or Body Fluids Contaminated with Blood

Personnel Management

If a staff member has parenteral (needle-stick, cut or other) or mucous membrane (splash to eye, nose or mouth) exposure to blood or other body fluids or has cutaneous exposure of non-intact skin (chapped, abraded, or afflicted with dermatitis) involving blood, promptly wash away the contaminated blood or fluid.

- Encourage bleeding, then wash with chlorhexidane skin disinfectant and water or copious amounts of water.
- If skin is contaminated with blood, without a cut or puncture, wash with chlorhexidane or soap and water.
- If the eyes are contaminated, rinse gently while open with tap water or saline for a long period of time.
- If blood gets in the mouth, spit it out and then rinse mouth thoroughly and repeatedly with water.

Report the incident immediately to ensure appropriate follow up. Complete an accident report form which should include:

- Date and time of exposure.
- How the incident occurred.
- Name of the individual who is the source of the blood or body fluid (if known).

High risk exposure should be evaluated as soon as possible by a physician with experience in the management of HIV-infection. The source patient should be informed of the exposure; and following appropriate explanation, should be asked to consent to serologic testing for evidence of:

- HIV antibody (informed consent required).
- Hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg).
- Hepatitis C antibody (Anti-HCV).

Blood samples should be collected as soon as possible after the incident and processed urgently.