



Higher Risk Personal Appearance Services Tattooing Information Sheet

This fact sheet provides information for tattooists about the health and hygiene requirements of the Public Health (Infection Control for Personal Appearance Services) Act 2003 and the Infection Control Guidelines for Personal Appearance Services 2004; as well as the structural requirements of the Queensland Development Code – Mandatory Part – MP 5.2 – Higher Risk Personal Appearance Services

1. **INTRODUCTION**

Tattooing involves penetration of the skin with a needle to insert colour pigments in order to create a permanent or semi-permanent mark, pattern, design or colouration of the skin. Cosmetic procedures including cosmetic tattooing or semi-permanent make-up also fall into this category.

Under the *Public Health (Infection Control for Personal Appearances Act) 2003*, tattooists are required to hold suitable qualifications to provide their service. This is the competency standard HLTIN2A – Maintain Infection control Standards in Office Practice Settings from the HLT02 Health training Package.

As tattooing is classified as a higher-risk personal appearance service under the *Act*, businesses are required to be licensed by Council. All businesses that provide higher-risk personal appearance services are also subject to an annual inspection by an Environmental Health Officer to monitor compliance of the business with the *Act*.

As there is a high risk of infection that can result from tattooing, tattooists must ensure that they follow the correct hygiene procedures to prevent bacterial, fungal and viral infections such as HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C.

2. **PREMISES**

All tattooing premises must comply with the structural requirements of the *Queensland Development Code – Mandatory Part – MP 5.2 – Higher Risk Personal Appearance Services*.

These requirements include:

- Suitable hand washing and instrument cleaning facilities to provide and maintain hygienic conditions
- Finishes must have a suitable joining system to facilitate the maintenance of hygienic conditions
- Internal wall, ceiling and floor finishes must have a suitable joining system to facilitate the maintenance of hygienic conditions

3. **PERSONAL HYGIENE**

Hand washing is generally considered to be the most important measure in preventing the spread of infection. Hand washing removes significant numbers of infectious agents when it is done properly.

Tattooists must wash their hands:

- Before and after each client
- After contact with blood or other bodily substances
- After contact with used instruments, jewellery and surfaces contaminated with (or which may have been contaminated with) blood or other body substances

- After other activities which may cause contamination of the hands and forearms e.g. smoking, eating, using the toilet, touching part of your body while performing a procedure
- Whenever hands are visibly soiled

Tattooists must cover visible skin lesions (such as cuts, abrasions and/or infections) on exposed parts of their bodies with an adhesive, water-resistant dressing.

Operators must ensure that they do not smoke, eat or drink while attending to clients, or while cleaning or disinfecting instruments.

Clean clothing must be worn while attending to clients. For the safety of operators, closed, puncture resistant footwear must be worn, especially when handling sharp instruments capable of piercing the skin if dropped e.g. needles.

4. EQUIPMENT

Ink

- Ink, pigments or dyes and water should not be re-used on a client if they have already been used on another client
- Ink must be stored in a way that prevents contamination at all times
- Water or other liquid for mixing the ink must only be used if it is free of contamination by microbiological, chemical and radiological substances (e.g. use treated drinking water, ethyl alcohol)

Stencils and Outlines

- Single-use stencils are recommended
- Ensure stencils are clean before applying them to a client's skin
- Apply clean soapy water to assist with fixing the stencil to the client's skin
- Lubricating jelly must not be re-used between clients. Use a clean implement to divide a small portion of lubricating jelly into a clean container from the stock supply. Ensure that any jelly left in the container at the end of the procedure is thrown away
- Do not apply stencils with re-usable applicators (e.g. deodorant sticks)
- Clean all implements and containers after use

Tattoo needles and needle bar

Do not re-use hollow (hypodermic) needles as they cannot be effectively cleaned and sterilised. Ensure that tattoo needles and needle bars, tubes or barrels used on a client are clean and sterile.

Cosmetic tattooing or micro-pigmentation machines

- Ensure that the machine or needle tips, needles and the machine barrel casing are clean and sterile
- After the tattooing procedure for each client is completed, wipe the casing covering the motor with a clean paper towel moistened with warm water and detergent and allow the casing to dry

5. PROCEDURES

- Wash hands before starting tattooing procedures or touching sterile equipment
- Ensure that the working environment is clean
- Ensure that all required instruments, materials and equipment are at hand in the immediate working area
- If necessary, cover benches or couches to be used by the client with clean linen
- Cover surfaces or controls likely to be touched by the operator with clean, unused plastic wrap



- Open sterile packs of instruments, materials and dressings in front of the client while ensuring the items do not become contaminated
- Prepare client's skin with antiseptic
- Wash and dry hands then put on single-use gloves
- Excess pigment and blood produced during procedure should be removed with pre-dispensed cleaning solution and single-use wipes. Wipes should be disposed of into a clinical or related waste container
- Cover tattoo site with clean, sterile dressing
- Wash hands after each client

6. POST-TREATMENT

- Dispose of all single-use items into the infectious waste bin and disposable sharps into a puncture-resistant sharps container
- Clean the immediate working area in which the procedure was performed
- Remove and clean linen used in work area
- Clean motor of tattoo gun's handpiece after a tattooing procedure for each client is completed, with a clean paper towel moistened with warm water and detergent and allow it to dry
- Clean and sterilise needle and needle bar before breaking the needle and disposing into a sharps waste container. If needle is removed from the needle bar carefully by heating and liquefying the soldered joint, there is no need to clean and sterilise the needle before disposing of into a sharps container
- Clean hands
- Provide client with after-care information for tattoo including:
 - Likely healing times
 - How to care for tattoo and clean site
 - Possible infections and what to look for