



Higher Risk Personal Appearance Services

Body Piercing

Information Sheet

This fact sheet provides information for body piercers 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

Body piercing is the process of penetrating a person's skin or mucous membrane with a sharp instrument for the purpose of implanting jewellery or other foreign material through or into the skin or mucous membrane. The term 'body piercing' does not include closed ear and nose piercing procedures.

Under the *Public Health (Infection Control for Personal Appearance Services) 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 body piercing 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 body piercing, body piercers 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.

Body piercers 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

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

Body piercers 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

- All equipment must be cleaned between uses
- Equipment used to penetrate the skin must be sterilised before it is used
- It is recommended that records are kept of equipment sterilisation
- Single-use equipment is recommended to reduce the likelihood of infection transmission
- Single-use equipment must be disposed of immediately in an approved sharps container
- Do not re-use hollow (hypodermic) needles as they cannot be effectively cleaned and sterilised

5. PROCEDURES

- Clean area to be pierced with antiseptic
- Use clean and sterile instruments when piercing a person or enlarging a piercing, or when inserting or adjusting jewellery
- Clean and sterilise jewellery before using on a person
- Use jewellery featuring low or non-allergenic qualities, of a grade suitable for piercing the body e.g. high quality stainless steel, titanium, niobium, palladium and 18 carat gold
- Only handle sterile jewellery with sterile gloves

6. POST-TREATMENT

- Dispose of single-use gloves and wash hands
- Clean all equipment after treatment
- Dispose of single-use sharps in puncture-resistant sharps bin
- Sterilise re-usable equipment in accordance with the Infection Control Guidelines for Personal Appearance Services 2004
- Record details of equipment sterilisation
- Provide client with after-care information for piercing to prevent infection including:
 - Likely healing times
 - How to care for piercing and clean site
 - Possible infections and what to look for

