

Environmental Health Department  
58 St Johns Road, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 1LT



# TATTOOING

*These notes should be  
read in conjunction with  
the general information  
on skin piercing and the  
bylaws on this subject.*

## **EQUIPMENT**

Autoclave with temperature/pressure gauges.  
Ultrasonic cleaner.  
Syringe for Vaseline.  
Disposable razors.  
Disposable capsules for pigment.  
Disposable 'sharps' box for needles.  
Autoclavable containers for needles, eg kidney dish.  
Metal forceps.  
Disinfectants.  
Sterile non-stick gauze, eg Melolin.  
Alcohol-impregnated swabs (pre-packed)  
Disposable plastic gloves.

## **PREPARATION & TATTOOING OPERATION**

Tattooists should wear disposable gloves whilst tattooing to minimise the risk of infection to themselves. The gloves should be discarded after use on one customer. Tattoos should never be carried out within six inches of an infected area of skin, or skin covered with a rash.

### ***Shaving & cleaning of skin***

The skin to be tattooed should be wiped over with an alcohol-impregnated swab.

A disposable razor is recommended to be used for shaving the skin. The razor must then be discarded after being used on one customer only.

### ***Vaseline***

Vaseline must not be taken from a jar with fingers or with a spatula that has been used for previous customers as contamination is likely.

Vaseline in tubes is acceptable, or alternatively it can be administered from an autoclaved metal syringe. The tip of the tube or syringe should not be allowed to come into contact with the customer's skin.

~~The Vaseline should be smeared on the skin with a disposable wooden or plastic spatula. The spatula must only be used on one customer before being discarded.~~

## ***Preparation & use of tattoo equipment***

Wherever possible, single-use disposable needles should be used. Because of the high risk of bloodborne infections such as Hepatitis B and C and HIV, re-usable needles should be phased out in preference for single-use disposable needles.

If re-usable needles are used they must be ultrasonically cleaned and autoclaved between customers.

The estimated number of needles needed for one day's use should be soldered on to the rods with lead-free solder in advance of the day's work.

The rods and needles should then be treated ultrasonically to remove flux residue, dust and any organic matter.

The rods and needles should then be sterilised. It must be ensured that they are not contaminated with Vaseline or grease before being placed in the autoclave. The tubes, forceps, metal syringes, kidney dishes and pigment capsule holders must be similarly sterilised.

The parts of the tattooing instrument that cannot be heat sterilised, ie the frames, should be disinfected with a chemical disinfectant.

## **AFTERCARE**

### ***Cleansing & disposal of equipment***

After each customer is tattooed the needle bars and tubes must be disengaged from the machine and placed in an autoclavable dish, eg a stainless steel kidney dish. This dish must be designated as 'dirty equipment only'.

At the end of the session needles and needle bars must be cleaned ultrasonically and autoclaved. The tubes must also be placed in a sharps box for disposal.

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IF YOU REQUIRE ANY FURTHER INFORMATION  
PLEASE CONTACT:

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