



State of New York County of Broome Government Offices

Broome County Health Department · Environmental Health

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Guidelines for Tattoo Establishments

1. There should be sufficient toilet and hand washing facilities accessible to customers in the tattoo establishment.
2. The tattoo establishment and equipment should be maintained in a state of good repair at all times. All parts of the tattoo establishment and its premises should be kept clean, neat and free of rubbish.
3. The floor of the work area in the tattoo establishment should be of impervious material and kept in a reasonably sanitary condition. The walls of the work area should be light colored. Floors, walls, or ceilings should not be swept or cleaned while tattooing is in operation.
4. There should be provisions made by the tattoo operator for the proper and safe disposal of all types of hazardous biological waste products. Any material contaminated with blood must be handled, stored, and disposed of in accordance with Federal, State and Local Laws and acceptable to the Health Officer.
5. Tattoo establishments should have work areas that are separate and apart from the rest of the establishment. These areas should not be used as corridors for access to other areas. Patrons should be tattooed in said work areas only. No other activities may take place in the work areas.
6. Each work area should have hand washing facilities equipped with hot (at least 120 degrees Fahrenheit) and cold running water. At least fifty (50) foot-candles of light must be available.
7. Each hand washing facility should be provided with hand cleaning soap, detergent or other surfactant cleaning compound used for personal cleaning. Bar soap should not be used. Individual single service towels or warm air blowers are to be provided. Common towels should not be used. Conveniently located waste receptacles should be provided.
8. Hand washing facilities, hand washing devices and related equipment should be kept clean and in good repair. Tattoo artists should wash hands thoroughly after using the toilet, sneezing, coughing, eating, drinking or otherwise soiling their hands before returning to work. Hand washing signs should be posted at all employee hand washing facilities.
9. Adequate cabinets for the storage of instruments, dyes, pigments, carbon and

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stencils should be provided for each tattoo operator and should be maintained in a sanitary manner. Poisons, including germicidal solutions, used in the tattoo establishment should be stored in covered containers with labels identifying the contents.

10. An adequate number of worktables should be provided for each tattoo artist. The surface of all work tables should be constructed of a material that is smooth, light colored, non-absorbent, corrosion-resistant, and easily cleaned and disinfected.

11. Food and drink should not be permitted in work areas.

12. Animals should not be permitted throughout the tattoo establishment.

13. Each tattoo artist should wear a clean outer garment.

14. Each working surface should be cleaned and disinfected after each use.

15. No person with any disease in a communicable form or suspected of having such a disease should engage in tattooing. Such diseases may include, but should not be limited to, influenza, tuberculosis, scabies, impetigo, syphilis, chicken pox, mumps, infection on hands or arms, sore throat or jaundice of the skin.

16. A tattoo artist should clean his/her fingernails and thoroughly wash and scrub his/her hands with warm running water and soap, detergent or other surfactant cleaning compound before working on each patron. Bar soap should not be permitted.

17. A tattoo artist should not allow his/her hands to dry without the use of individual single service towels or warm air blowers.

18. That portion of the patron's skin that is to be tattooed should be prepared by washing with warm water and soap, detergent or other surfactant cleaning compound. Bar soap should not be used.

19. A new disposable razor should be used prior to the application of the tattoo when it is necessary to shave the area to be tattooed. Once it is used on a patron, the razor should be disposed of. If longer hair must be removed first, any scissors or clippers should be sterilized prior to being used.

20. The tattoo artist should again wash and scrub his or her hands, as described in item (#16) above, following the cleaning and/or shaving of the patron's skin.

21. The tattoo artist should wear single service, disposable gloves when applying a tattoo. The gloves must be properly disposed of once used on a patron. Hand washing should occur each time gloves are removed.

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22. The tattoo artist should treat the skin area with a germicidal solution listed in the United States Pharmacopeia or National Formulary, which should be applied with sterile cotton or sterile gauze, before placing the design on the patron's skin. If petroleum jelly (petrolatum) is used, it must be listed in the United States Pharmacopeia or National Formulary, and should be applied to the area to be tattooed. The application may be spread by the use of sterile gauze or sterile single use applicators. Fingers, gloved or ungloved should not be used to remove product for application.

23. The stencil used by a tattoo artist for transferring the design to the skin should be disposable and single use only. Any writing instrument touching the skin should be new and single use only.

24. Styptic pencils or alum solids should not be used to check the flow of blood, should such flow of blood occur.

25. Any infection resulting from the tattoo procedure which becomes known to the tattoo operator or the establishment should be immediately reported to the Broome County Department of Health.

26. Dyes or pigments should be obtained only from a reputable tattoo supplier. Only nontoxic and sterile material should be used in preparing dyes or pigments to be used by a tattoo artist. Single-service or individual portions of dyes or pigments should be stored in clean, sterilized individual containers or single-service containers before use on each person.

27. The remaining unused dye or pigment in the single-service or individual containers should be discarded after tattooing is completed.

28. Patrons should be provided printed warning of the potential physical reactions from the use of certain dyes in a form acceptable to the Broome County Department of Health.

Sterilization:

1. A set of individual single-service, clean and sterile needles should be used by the tattoo artist for each new patron. Clean and sterile tubes should also be used for each new patron.

2. Any reusable instruments or parts thereof should be thoroughly cleaned ultrasonically prior to sterilization.

3. All instruments to be sterilized should be placed in appropriate wrappers or bags prior to being placed in an autoclave or dry heat sterilizer. Sterilization may be accomplished by holding in an approved autoclave for twenty (20) minutes at fifteen (15) pounds pressure at a temperature of 250 degrees F or 121 degrees

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C. An indicator should be used to show that the proper temperature has been reached in an autoclave. Sterilization may be accomplished by dry heat at 300 degrees Fahrenheit for two and one half (2½) hours, or at 320 degrees Fahrenheit for two (2) hours, or 340 degrees Fahrenheit for one (1) hour. If dry heat sterilization is employed, sterilization temperatures must be checked each time the unit is operated by using a temperature indicator label capable of measuring temperatures of 300, 320 or 340 degrees Fahrenheit, depending on the time allotted for proper sterilization. Sterilization equipment should be spore tested monthly by an independent testing facility, to check for biologic growth. If the tattoo establishment is notified by the independent testing facility that a test result is positive for biologic growth, the tattoo establishment should immediately cease all operations, and notify Clinics at the Broome County Department of Health. Operations for the tattoo establishment should not resume until test results that are negative for biologic growth have been provided to the Broome County Department of Health by the testing facility. Records should be kept in a log book for a minimum of three (3) years. All items in the units must go through a second sterilization cycle, if at any time during the sterilization process the registered heat tapes or temperature indicator labels fail to indicate proper sterilization temperatures were achieved. All grips and needle bars should be left in approved wrappers or sterilizer bags during the sterilization process. They should remain in these wrappers or bags until they are used. These wrapped articles should be stored in a closed cabinet and maintained in a sanitary manner at all times.

4. All used needles should be placed immediately in a “Sharps” container for storage until final disposal from the premises. No needles may be given to patrons.

After-Care of the Tattoo:

1. The completed tattoo should be washed with a piece of sterile gauze or sterile cotton saturated with an approved germicidal solution. It should be allowed to air dry.

2. An anti-bacterial or alternate suitable ointment should be applied from a collapsible metal or plastic tube after drying. The entire area may be covered with a piece of sterile gauze, which may, in turn, be covered with a piece of tissue and fastened to the site with an appropriate type of adhesive.

3. The tattoo establishment should provide written aftercare instructions