

PUBLIC PROTECTION DIVISION  
222 UPPER STREET, LONDON N1 1XR  
STANDARD CONDITIONS  
FOR PREMISES PROVIDING BODY PIERCING AND TATTOO TREATMENTS  
London Local Authorities Act 1991-2000

These conditions are to be read in conjunction with the Standard Conditions for Special Treatment Premises. Other conditions may be added to licences if circumstances warrant this.

**Definitions**

**Tattooing:**

The process of permanently marking the skin by inserting ink into the lower layers of skin with a needle.

**Note:**

For the purposes of these conditions tattooing will include micro pigmentation also known as “semi permanent make-up”.

**Body Piercing:**

For the purposes of these conditions, body piercing is when a hole is made through the skin, and a piece of jewellery is put into the hole. These conditions do not include ear or nose piercing as they are covered by other conditions.

**GENERAL**

1. A body piercer or tattooist must obtain a certificate from a Registered Medical Practitioner to show that he or she has been tested for Hepatitis B Antigens and Antibodies and has satisfactorily completed a Hepatitis B vaccination course. The certificate shall be submitted to the Public Protection Division. It is the responsibility of the holder of the Special Treatment Premises Licence to ensure that all staff are immunised against Hep B.
2. Under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, license holders, as employers, are required to ensure that they provide all information, instruction, training and supervision necessary “so far as is reasonably practicable” to protect the health and safety of their employees. However, there are currently no recognised training courses; it is the duty of employers to provide adequate on-the-job training for employees. Proposed introductions:
  - a) Every applicant has worked for at least 1 year as a professional within licensed premises and can provide references to it.
  - b) All license holder are aware they, and every operator working under their licence, must be capable of demonstrating that they have sufficient knowledge, skills, training and experience commensurate with the procedures they are carrying out.
  - c) All operators must hold a current first aid certificate to foundation level.
  - d) Operators should be familiar with the preparation of risk assessments (or at least written methods statements acknowledging the risks involved in their business) for the work undertaken.

This should be recommended as part of ongoing training for apprentices/trainees.
3. A body piercer or tattooist must have undertaken an approved training course in first aid, such as the one-day “Basic First Aid” course. Such training courses are offered by the British Red Cross (00870 170 9222) or the St John Ambulance (020 7258 3456). There are other training organisations which advertise in Yellow Pages but please check with the Council whether a particular organisation is approved.

4. Branding is absolutely prohibited in Special Treatment Premises.
5. The Licensee is advised that the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985 should be considered when requests for the piercing of female genitalia are made. Anything which goes beyond simple piercing may amount to mutilation and may therefore be prohibited by the Act.
6. The person performing the piercing/tattoo or the person having the piercing or tattoo shall not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Operators must not eat or drink during procedures.
7. It is illegal to smoke anywhere on the premises
8. Piercing or tattooing shall be done in a room/area which cannot be viewed by members of the public outside the premises.
9. A fully stocked basic first aid kit must be kept on the premises.

#### CLEANING AND STERILISATION OF EQUIPMENT

10. In addition to the General Licence Conditions for all special treatment premises:
  - a) All surfaces that come into contact with staff equipment or clients must be disinfected daily;
  - b) Any surfaces used during treatments must be disinfected prior to use;
  - c) Any treatment chair/ couches must be disinfected after each client; and
  - d) Any equipment that has been contaminated with blood however small must be cleaned and sterilized.
11. Unless only sterile single-use equipment is used, an autoclave must be used to sterilise piercing and/or tattooing equipment. Pre cleaning should be carried out prior to sterilisation. The Licensee must ensure that the autoclave is safe, working efficiently and properly maintained.
  - a) All autoclaves should be operated in line with the manufacturers instructions and only loads for which the steriliser is designed should be processed through the system.
  - b) The Licensee must ensure that the autoclave is subject to a thorough examination by a competent person at a frequency prescribed by them in writing. Records of the thorough examination must be kept on the premises. The licence holder must keep a maintenance log for the autoclave.
12. Non-wrapped items processed in an autoclave should be used direct from the autoclave and/or sterilised items are to be used within 3 hours or re-sterilisation is required.
13. If the autoclave is not equipped with a post sterilisation drying phase non-wrapped equipment and/or packages must not be removed damp from an autoclave and subsequently dried.
14. Dried non-wrapped equipment which has been subject to complete drying within the autoclave, before the door is opened, can be stored in a dry, airtight disinfected container.

#### WASTE

15. A licensed waste disposal contractor must be employed to collect and dispose of skin piercing needles (sharps) and paper towels, gauze, swabs, gloves etc., which could be contaminated with blood/body fluids from the premises.
  - a) Sharps must be disposed of in an approved yellow plastic box which conforms to BS7320 1990 and/or be UN type approved.
  - b) The other waste should be placed in suitable, clearly marked plastic sacks provided or approved by the contractor for the removal of clinical waste.
16. Sharps containers must not be overfilled and should be removed when three quarters full, sealed and labelled. They must not be placed in other trade waste sacks.

## USE OF ANAESTHETICS

17. Only operators who have attended an appropriate course on use of topical anaesthetics will be permitted to use them.
18. The use of anaesthetic injections is not permitted.

## **TATTOOING**

### CLIENT CONSULTATION

1. The licensee and staff performing tattooing should be able to demonstrate knowledge of the possible contra-indications to the treatment and should discuss with the client his or her medical history to include the following conditions:
  - a) Eczema;
  - b) Psoriasis;
  - c) Haemophilia;
  - d) High/low blood pressure;
  - e) Epilepsy;
  - f) Diabetes; and
  - g) Allergies.

They should also determine if the client is:

- h) Taking medication or blood thinning agents;
- i) Breast feeding; or
- j) Pregnant.

Where any of the above conditions exist, written consent from the clients GP must be given before any tattooing is carried out.

2. The consultation should detail:
  - a) Area to be tattooed;
  - b) Treatment plan;
  - c) Date of tattoo and dates of subsequent visits to complete a tattoo;
  - d) Date of birth of the client;
  - e) Proof of ID shown where requested;
  - f) Record that aftercare advice/leaflet given; and
  - g) Name of tattooist that carried out the treatment.
3. The consultation record should be signed by the client as a declaration of agreement to the treatment, having understood all the associated risks.
4. The consultation records must be available for inspection on the request of an authorised officer and be retained for a minimum of two years.

### AGE

5. The Tattooing of Minors Act 1969 prohibits the tattooing of anyone in Great Britain under the age of 18 years.
6. Any person wishing to receive a licensable treatment will need to provide proof of their age if they look under 25.
7. Licensees must advertise this policy so that all clients are made aware that they may be challenged about their age if they look under 25.
8. Acceptable forms of ID are accredited proof of age cards e.g. Citizencard, a Passport, or UK Driving Licence bearing the photograph and date of birth of the bearer a photo driving licence, passport or the PASS hologram proof of age card.
9. Where a challenge is made, it must be recorded and proof age also noted on the client consultation record.

## METHOD

10. Each operator is to maintain an acceptable standard of personal cleanliness at times. Operators' hands should be washed with liquid soap and hot water and dried with disposable paper towel. Single use disposable rubber gloves are to be worn for each client and changed when they come into contact with non-sterile surfaces.
11. Tattooing should never be carried out within six inches of an infected area of skin or skin with an irritation.
12. The skin to be tattooed should be wiped over with a fresh pre-packed spirit swab. A single use disposable razor is to be used on each client.
13. The tubes, i.e., the holders for the stainless steel needle bars, must also be sterilised after each customer.
14. Single use, sterile disposable needles should be used. After use these must be "burned off" by flaming from the point to the soldered junction and discarded into a sharps container for disposal.
15. Re-usable needle bars must be ultrasonically cleaned and sterilised after each use.
16. Once a needle has been used on a customer it must not be returned to the tube - only unused (sterilised) needles may be placed in the tubes.
17. Needles must not be tested on the tattooist's skin.
18. Sterile forceps must be used for handling sterile needles and bars. These must be re-sterilised with each new batch of needles.
19. Capsule holders and forceps must be sterilised between clients.
20. Holding tubes for motors must be sterilised between clients.
21. Any non-disposable equipment that is liable to come into contact with blood or body fluids and cannot be sterilised, e.g. tattoo motors, should be adequately covered (where possible) to protect from such contact and should be thoroughly cleaned between clients e.g. 70% alcohol solution.
22. Materials used to cover equipment must be disposed of after every client.
23. Elastic bands used to secure the tattooing machine must be replaced after every client.
24. Single-use stencils are to be used on individual clients.
25. Fresh pigments in disposable sterile containers must be used for each client.
26. The pigment capsules must be disposed of after each client.
27. Where Vaseline is used for procedures, single-use packs should be used. Where this is not possible an appropriate amount of Vaseline must be dispensed, using a single-use implement, into a single-use pot/tray for every client.
28. Disposable wooden or plastic spatulas must be used to smear the Vaseline on the skin. Spatulas must only be used on one client and then discarded.
29. All clients shall be given verbal and written information about the aftercare of the tattoo. A sample of the written advice shall be sent to the Public Protection Division.

## **BODY PIERCING**

### CLIENT CONSULTATION

1. The licensee and staff performing body piercing should be able to demonstrate knowledge of the possible contra-indications to the treatment and should discuss with the client his or her medical history to include the following conditions:
  - a) Eczema;
  - b) Psoriasis;
  - c) Haemophilia;
  - d) High/low blood pressure;
  - e) Epilepsy;
  - f) Diabetes; and
  - g) Allergies.

They should also determine if the client is:

- h) Taking medication or blood thinning agents.

Where any of the above conditions exist, written consent from the clients GP must be given before any tattooing is carried out.

2. The consultation should detail:
  - a) Area to be pierced;
  - b) Treatment plan;
  - c) Date of piercing;
  - d) Date of birth of the client;
  - e) Proof of ID shown where requested;
  - f) Record that aftercare advice/leaflet given; and
  - g) Name of piercer that carried out the treatment.
3. The consultation record should be signed by either the client or their parent/guardian as a declaration of agreement to the treatment, having understood all the associated risks.
4. The consultation records must be available for inspection on the request of an authorised officer and be retained for a minimum of two years.

### AGE

5. Clients must be over the age of 18 for all types of body piercing other than ear, nose, lip (labret), eyebrow or navel.
6. Clients under the age of 16 are only authorised for ear or nose piercing and must be accompanied by a parent or guardian who must sign the appropriate consent forms.
7. Any person wishing to receive a licensable treatment will need to provide proof of their age if they look under 25.
8. Licensees must advertise this policy so that all clients are made aware that they may be challenged about their age if they look under 25.
9. Acceptable forms of ID are accredited proof of age cards e.g. Citizencard, a Passport, or UK Driving Licence bearing the photograph and date of birth of the bearer a photo driving licence, passport or the PASS hologram proof of age card.
10. Where a challenge is made, it must be recorded and proof age also noted on the client consultation record.

## METHOD

11. Unless single-use equipment is used all instruments used for piercing and any jewellery inserted after piercing must be sterilised in an autoclave before use. For body piercing jewellery must be 14ct or 18ct gold, niobium, titanium and platinum. Incorrect gauges and surgical steel not recommended as a suitable material for body piercing jewellery.
12. A “no touch” technique, for example, using forceps, should be used as much as possible to reduce the risk of skin and soft tissue infections. Disposable rubber gloves must be worn.
13. Pre-packed, pre-sterilised, disposable hollow piercing needles shall be used followed by jewellery of the same diameter as the needle.
14. If the skin is to be marked for piercing it should be done prior to the cleansing of the skin. The marking should be done with a fine indelible pen (preferably gentian violet).
15. The skin in the area of the piercing must be intact. The skin shall be cleansed with a suitable disinfectant such as 70% ethanol or isopropyl alcohol swabs.
16. Each operator is to maintain an acceptable standard of personal cleanliness at all times. Operator’s hands should be washed with liquid soap and hot water and dried with disposable paper towel. Single use disposable rubber gloves are to be worn for each client and changed when they come into contact with non-sterile surfaces.
17. An appropriate surface local anaesthetic may be applied, by a suitably trained piercer, to the area to be pierced using a clean disposable applicator, for example, a piece of sterile gauze for each application. Anaesthetics (creams, sprays) should only be used for the purpose intended by the manufacturer and for which they are licensed in the UK.  

Operators must advise clients that an anaesthetic will be used and, in following the information provided by the manufacturer, discuss any potential allergy or contraindication with the client; and
18. To minimise the risk of fainting, the client should be in a reclined position when piercing is carried out, except for tongue piercing as there is a risk of swallowing jewellery or the tongue itself.
19. The skin to be pierced should be steadied, if practicable, with sterile forceps or with gloved fingers or against a sterilised thimble. The needle should be held as far away from the tip as possible whilst still allowing good control of the tip of the needle. The jewellery should be pushed through following in the same direction as the needle.
20. Prior to piercing the tongue, cheek or lip the client shall gargle and rinse the mouth with antiseptic mouth wash.
21. No attempt shall be made to increase the size of a piercing until it has completely healed.
22. All clients shall be given verbal and written information about the aftercare of the piercing. A sample of the written advice shall be sent to the Public Protection Division.