

Health & Safety: SKIN PIERCING (Acupuncture, Tattooists, Cosmetic Ear-Piercing and Electrolysis)

The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 Part VIII and the Local Government Act 2003 requires the following types of skin piercing must be registered with local District Councils.

- Acupuncture
- Tattooing
- Cosmetic and Ear-Piercing
- Electrolysis

The Act requires registration to cover both the person carrying on the practice and the premises used for that purpose. There are no powers to refuse registration but the practice is controlled through compliance with byelaws in each case. The applicant must ensure that the procedures, equipment and facilities used are safe, hygienic, prevent the spread of disease and comply fully with the general duty of care required by the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. It is illegal to conduct cosmetic and ear piercing, tattooing, acupuncture or electrolysis unless the registration has been formally approved. Once an application has been made and a fee has been paid, an inspector will undertake an inspection of the premises. If the inspector considers the applicant's procedures and the premises to be suitable, then registration will be approved. The Inspector will also check compliance with the following byelaw requirements as well as ensuring that general health and safety requirements are being met. The inspector will be pleased to offer any advice or give any help if you are unsure as to how to meet these obligations.

1. Bye-laws requirements:

Premises:

- All surfaces in any part of the premises used by clients must be kept clean and in good repair
- Furniture and fittings in the treatment area must be kept clean and in good repair
- Tables, couches, seats etc used in the treatment area must have a smooth, impervious surface which is regularly wiped down with disinfectant and covered by a disposable paper sheet, changed after each client.
- A 'No Smoking' sign must be prominently displayed.
- Cleanliness of operatives - Any overall worn by the operative should be clean and in good repair

- The operative's hands and nails must be kept clean, any open cut, wound, sore or boil must be suitably covered by an impermeable dressing
- The operative should not smoke nor drink in the treatment area
- The operative should have sole use of the washing facilities which must provide adequate and constant hot and cold running water, soap (or a similar cleanser) and a nail brush

Equipment

- Any needle, metal instrument or other item of equipment used in the treatment must be in a sterile condition and kept sterile until it is used. If pre-sterilised items are not used then adequate facilities must be provided for the purpose of sterilisation.
- If tattooing is being undertaken, then all dyes used must be bacteriological clean and inert.
- The containers used to hold dyes for each customer must be disposed of at the end of each treatment or sterilised before re-use.

General

It is an offence to tattoo any person under the age of 18 years (the Tattooing of Minors Act 1969) regardless of parental consent. A person under the age of 18 years may receive body piercing provided that you have received written permission from, or the treatment is performed in the presence of, the person's parent or guardian. Nipple and genital piercing is prohibited on minors, regardless of parental consent. The health of the client and the suitability of the treatment should be discussed prior to its administration.

General Health & Safety:

• **Electrical Safety:**

All equipment should be installed and maintained by a competent person. It is recommended (IEE Wiring Regs BS7671) that the fixed system is inspected/tested at least every five years (or more frequently as recommended by a qualified electrician) and that all electrical appliances are examined/checked ("PAT" Tested) at a frequency appropriate to the risk.

Regular maintenance should include visual checks for general wear and tear ensuring that plugs, leads and sockets are in good condition and that there is no exposed wiring. Any corrective actions must be carried out immediately.

• **Safe use of machinery/equipment**

To prevent harm to employees ensure that all staff are fully trained to use the equipment provided. Ensure that workplace equipment is maintained and it is safe for use.

- **Floors, Corridors and Stairs:**

In order to prevent slips/trips these areas should be kept free from obstructions at all times. Floor coverings and walkways should be maintained and should be well lit. Spillages should be cleared up immediately. Warning signs should be displayed during cleaning to warn customers/staff of potentially slippery surfaces. Any change in floor levels should be made clearly visible.

- **Hazardous substances:**

To prevent personal harm from hazardous substances a COSHH risk assessment is required e.g. for cleaning chemicals, micro-pigmentation inks etc.

For further advice on what you need to know about the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH) see a brief guide to the regulations which are published online at: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg136.pdf also HSE's online publication: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/guidance/sr12.pdf

- **Biological Hazards:**

All staff should be trained in safe working practices and personal hygiene standards and be provided with appropriate protective equipment e.g. disposable gloves and aprons. Staff should be made aware of blood-borne viruses, e.g. Hepatitis B & C and HIV. See HSE's online publication at: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg342.pdf

- **Safe Waste Disposal:**

Waste from skin piercing procedures is classed as clinical waste e.g. swabs, dressings, syringes, needles or other sharp instruments, waste, which unless rendered safe may prove hazardous to any person coming in to contact with it. The disposal of clinical waste is controlled by the Environment Agency.

There is a duty on those producing the clinical waste to take reasonable steps to handle and look after it safely, and to ensure others licensed to perform this task dispose of it legally. It is usually disposed of in yellow or orange clinical waste bags. Clinical waste must be kept apart from general waste and must only be disposed/removed from the premises by a contractor licensed under the Waste Management Licensing Regulations. Disused needles to be put into approved covered and leak proof "sharps" boxes, safely disposed of at suitable intervals. Clinical waste must be stored where children and scavenging animals cannot access it.

- **Smoking (Effective 1st July 2007)**

All premises, which are wholly or substantially enclosed and used as a place of work by more than one person are, now smoke free. "No smoking" signs must be displayed at the public entrance to the premises. Take reasonable steps to ensure that staff, customers etc. are aware that smoking is not permitted. Ensure that no one smokes in smoke free premises or vehicles.