

# Tattooing, Microblading and Micropigmentation – Code of Practice 8

## Purpose

The purpose of this code of practice (COP) is to support the policy decisions and conditions of licence adopted by the council in respect of special treatments establishments.

## Scope

This COP details specific requirements for tattooing activities in addition to those laid down in the regulations applicable to all special treatment licensed premises.

## Definitions

### Tattooing

- This is a process whereby the outer layers of the skin are punctured with a dye-loaded needle and colour is inserted into the dermal (lower layer) to achieve a permanent design. This action causes local inflammation and bleeding. Precautions are necessary to prevent the possible spread of blood-borne infection. For the purposes of this COP tattooing will include micropigmentation and microblading, temptooos and tattoo removal.

### Cleaning

- This is a physical process which removes soil e.g. dust, dirt and organic matter, along with a large proportion of germs. Cleaning with hot water and detergent breaks up grease and dirt on floors and surfaces. Cleaning is also essential prior to disinfection and sterilisation of instruments and equipment.

### Disinfection

- For the purposes of these treatments a high-level disinfectant relates to disinfectants capable of reducing the number of viable bacteria and blood borne viruses including Hepatitis B & C and HIV but which may not necessarily inactivate some viruses and bacterial spores. Where the disinfectant requires dilution, this must be carried out in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions using clean potable water. Once diluted the disinfectant must be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Immersion must be in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions

## Sterilisation

- Refers to a treatment cycle that renders equipment free from viable micro-organisms i.e. capable of killing bacteria, fungi, viruses and bacterial spores.
- Where sterilisation is carried out, documented procedures shall be available for:
  - The validation of the sterilisation process. Wrapped or hollow items must be sterilised in a vacuum steam steriliser.
  - The method of inspection of packing and seals, copies of steriliser maintenance details and verification records.
  - The storage facilities and practices for sterile packs

## Ultrasonication

- This is an effective cleaning method with minimal handling of contaminated equipment. This cleaning attacks every surface, including apertures and recesses. Cleaning agents are added to the bath. Some cleaning agents are also disinfectants which will reduce the bacterial load. Ultrasonic baths should be used, maintained and validated according to the manufacturer's instructions.

## Client consultation

A full client consultation must be carried out at the time of a first visit. A patch test must be carried out for microblading and micropigmentation and recorded. Consultation to include the following:

- medical history
  - eczema
  - psoriasis

- haemophilia
- heat disorders/disorders
- blood thinning agents
- high/low blood pressure
- medication
- nursing Mothers
- pregnancy
- epilepsy
- diabetes
- allergies
- contra indications noted
- area to be treated
- treatment plan
- date of treatment
- date of birth of the client
- name of tattooist who carried out the treatment
- No client shall be treated if they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol

This record should be signed by the client as a declaration of agreement to treatment having understood all the associated risks. A record of subsequent treatments must be kept, these must be available for inspection by an authorised officer (on presentation of written consent from the client). Copies of aftercare advice must be available for inspection.

## Standard infection control procedures

### Staff and client health

- All staff must be vaccinated against Hepatitis B and records to be made available. Tattooing must not be carried out on or within 10 centimetres of an infected area of skin, a rash, cut or other wound.

### Blood spillage – Kit to be made available

Where any blood spillage occurs, it shall be cleaned up as soon as possible using the procedure stated below:

- put on disposable gloves and apron
- place disposable paper towels on blood spillage

- pour bleach on top of paper towels and leave for two minutes
- use paper towels to mop up spillage and then place then into clinical waste yellow bags
- discard gloves into yellow plastic bag
- wash and dry hands thoroughly then decontaminate with alcohol hand rub
- any contaminated clothes should be handled as little as possible and then only with gloves on
- they should be pre-washed then washed on a hot cycle of 64 Celsius for 10 minutes or 70 Celsius for a minimum of three mins or discarded as clinical waste
- this procedure must be documented and made available for all staff in the case of such an event

## Sharps injury

The licensee shall provide a written needle stick injury procedure. The procedure shall include the following

- what action to take in the event of such an injury
- encourage bleeding by squeezing gently
- do not suck wounds
- wash well with soap and warm running water
- cover with a dry dressing
- seek medical advice as soon as possible at the local Accident and Emergency Department
- recording of any puncture wound or contamination of broken skin, mouth or eyes and report the incident to the employer where necessary
- if an infection occurs as a result of the incident, it should be reported to the local authority by telephone

## Protective clothing

- Single use disposable plastic aprons should be worn for each client.
- Hot wash with detergent is sufficient for cleaning work clothes.
- Tattooists should routinely wear disposable single use vinyl or latex gloves while carrying out treatments.
- Gloves should be changed between clients or when otherwise contaminated during the procedure.
- Gloves should be replaced with new gloves if there is evidence of tearing or puncture.

- Face and eye protection shall be worn where there is a risk of splashing of blood/bodily fluids into the face
- Any PPE used must be changed between each client

## First aid

At all times that the premises are used for tattooing, there shall be at least one person at the premises that holds an up to date certificate in emergency first aid treatment.

## Qualifications

Any person carrying out tattooing must be suitably qualified in tattooing and be able to show proof of having undergone a two-year apprenticeship with an experienced tattooist. References must be provided from previous employment and verified as genuine by the licence holder. VTCT Level 4 certificate in micropigmentation and/or microblading is required.

Until such time as an externally verified tattooing qualification is offered all tattooists will be required to provide a certificate stating that they have attended and obtained knowledge in first aid and certified training in hygiene and infection control to Level 2 standard.

They must also be able to demonstrate an adequate knowledge of the following when questioned by an authorised officer.

- Health and safety
- Personal hygiene
- Infection control
- Client consultation
- Aftercare advice
- Contra-indications

Tattooing procedures should not be carried out by persons under the age of 18 years. Apprentices minimum age of 16.

## The tattooing procedure

### Pre-procedure

- Hands should be washed and dried thoroughly. Sink to have waterproof splash backs.

- Surfaces must clean and free from extraneous matter.
- All equipment not required in the tattooing procedures must be stored in a clean enclosed environment to protect from risk of environmental contamination.
- Assemble machine, cover and place on clean surface. Tattoo machines and electric cables/clip cords (grips and tubes- preferably disposable) shall be covered with clear plastic during a tattoo which is securely taped and disposed of between clients. All to be disinfected between clients.
- Use new elastic bands and grommets (rubber nipples) for each treatment.
- Only sterile inert in date pigment dispensed into single use pots or pre-packed in single use vials shall be used. Leftover ink shall be disposed of. Ideally the pots should be pre-packed and sterile or disinfected accordingly.
- Inks shall be purchased from reputable suppliers that are accompanied by the manufacturer's product quality information/hazard data sheets and must be used within their sell by date and batch numbers noted. Lists of ingredients shall be requested from suppliers and made available to clients and authorised officers of the council on request.
- Wash rinse and dry hands thoroughly apply alcohol rub.
- Disposable gloves should now be put on.
- If the area requires shaving, disposable razors should be used and disposed of immediately into a sharps container.

## Procedure

- The skin must be disinfected using a solution containing alcohol or appropriate sanitising skin wipes before any procedure is carried out.
- Clean water in a clean plastic cup should be used to rinse needles when changing dyes/inks.
- Discard after use.
- Disinfectants containing Chloroxyleneol or Chlorhexidine such as Dettol or Savlon used for transferring stencils should be used sparingly to avoid side effects such as skin irritation or other allergic reactions.
- Use of deodorant sticks between clients is not advised. Single use sticks should be used.
- The sharpness of the needles should not be tested on the operator or the client before use.
- If a solution is used to wash off excess dye this should be by use of an appropriate trigger spray bottle which is emptied and cleaned daily.

- Any instrument accidentally touched by the operator or contaminated in any way must be replaced.
- Petroleum jelly on the wound after tattooing is not recommended for optimum healing.
- Petroleum jelly use in any other part of the tattooing process must be decanted from the tub using a disposable spatula, which is discarded after use.
- The petroleum jelly must then be spread using a fresh, disposable spatula.
- A sterile non-adhesive dressing secured with hypo-allergenic tape should be placed over the tattooed area. If plastic film wrap is used for larger areas, then it must be clean (taken directly from the pack) and the client should be advised on when and how to replace this covering.

## After procedure

- Place used needles or other contaminated waste directly in sharps container/yellow bag immediately after use.
- Dismantle machine and place either into plastic container marked dirty instruments to await cleaning and ultrasonic bath or place directly into ultrasonic bath.
- Single use grips shall be disposed of between each client. Re-usable metal grips shall be cleaned and sterilised and seal wrapped between clients.
- Wipe overprotective cover of tattoo motor with alcohol and mild detergent between clients and dry afterwards.
- Wash and dry hands.

## Cleaning and sterilising of equipment

- All needles, needle housings/needle covers, needle bars, caps, cups, rings, tips, tubes, razors and blades, microblading tools, stencils, wooden spatulas and swabs must be single use, in date and disposed of appropriately after use. Needles and razors must never be re-sheathed or de-soldered after use and must be disposed of immediately after use into a sharps container.
- Under no circumstances should single use equipment be sterilised and reused on another client. To be opened immediately prior to use in front of client and to be in date.
- All surfaces that come into contact with staff equipment or clients must be cleaned at least daily with a suitable high-level disinfectant.
- This will include areas such as door and cupboard handles, light switches etc and any other contact points.



- Any surfaces used during treatments must be cleaned with a suitable high-level disinfectant prior to each use.
- Surfaces used during the treatment e.g., couch/chair must be wiped with a suitable disinfectant after each client and when preparing for the next.
- Other instruments that have accidentally penetrated the skin or are contaminated with blood must be properly cleaned and sterilised before further use.
- This should be carried out using the method stated below (decontamination and cleaning of utensils).
- Cartridge needles must contain a backflow preventor (also known as a membrane/safety membrane/barrier). Manufacturer's proof of this shall be available for inspection by an Authorised Officer at all reasonable times. Machine to be disinfected after each session.
- Metal microblading tools with replacement blade or needle holders can only be re-used with prior consent of the Council where there is access to ultrasonic cleaning and an autoclave for effective sterilisation, otherwise a single use microblading tool shall be used.

## Decontamination and cleaning of utensils

- All disposable parts must first be removed and disposed of safely. Where heavy soiling has occurred, the equipment shall be rinsed under running water wearing the appropriate protective equipment.
- If manual washing is carried out this shall take place in a dedicated deep sink located in a dirty area with hot and cold running water and mixer taps.
- The equipment must then be fully submerged in a correctly functioning ultrasonic cleaning bath.
- The cleaning solution used shall be made and used in accordance with the manufacturers guidance.
- The time of immersion shall be in accordance with the manufactures guidance.
- At each change of solution, the ultrasonic cleaner should be cleaned thoroughly inside and out with a suitable neutral detergent and soft brush.
- The equipment shall then be rinsed in clean water before being placed in the steriliser;
- Any equipment that cannot be sterilized in an autoclave must be thoroughly cleaned as above then immersed in a suitable high-level



disinfectant and then sterilised using a suitable chemical sterilising method before and after use on each client.

## Sterilisation

- All instruments used in the procedure to pierce a person's skin or objects in contact with broken skin that are not disposable, should be sterilised in an autoclave.
- Steam sterilisers without a vacuum phase must not be used for the sterilisation of wrapped items or instruments with narrow lumens e.g. needle tubes.
- Unwrapped items must be kept in a dry, clean airtight container and used within 3 hours of sterilisation or must be re-sterilised before use.
- All autoclaves used at the premises shall be chosen and used in accordance with the standards laid down in the current publication of the following:
  - MDA BD2002 (06) - bench-top steam sterilizers, guidance on purchase, operation and maintenance  
<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20141205025417/http://www.mhra.gov.uk/home/groups/dts-bi/documents/publication/con007327.pdf>
  - MDA DB 9804 - the validation and periodic testing of bench-top vacuum steam sterilizers  
<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20080611193257/http://www.mhra.gov.uk/home/groups/dts-bi/documents/publication/con2015680.pdf>

## Aftercare

Clients should be given verbal and written after-care advice appropriate to the position and size of tattoo they have had. This should also include advise of any possible complications.

## Age

The Tattooing of Minors Act 1969 prohibits the tattooing of anyone in Great Britain under the age of 18 years.

## Record keeping/informed consent

- Records kept must include steps taken to verify the age of the client e.g. photocopy of proof of age where appropriate (proof of age must include date of birth and a photograph).
- Before any tattooing takes place, the tattooist or other competent person shall fully explain the potential side effects and problems that can occur to the client.
- This informed consent must be recorded and signed by the client.
- For these purposes, a printed pro-forma should be used.

## Complaints procedure

The licensee shall provide a written procedure to deal with complaints from customers. All complaints shall be recorded along with details of the following:

- what action was taken to resolve the complaint
- any changes made in response to the complaint

A copy of the complaints procedure shall be kept at the premise at all times. A copy of all complaints and the above details shall be kept at the premises for a period of at least two years.

## CIEH Toolkit & Guidance

The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) in conjunction with Public Health England (PHE) and the Tattoo and Piercing Industry Union have issued a Toolkit detailing safe practice with regard to hygienically undertaking tattooing and skin piercing.

<https://www.cieh.org/media/2004/tattooing-and-body-piercing-guidance-toolkit-july-2013.pdf>

It is expected that the practitioners adhere to the requirements and recommendations contained within this document.

## Review

This code of practice may be reviewed regularly and updated in light of current industry guidance and legal opinion. Any changes will be notified to licensees and will be attached as conditions to your licence with effect from the date of the next renewal of your licence.

The following London Borough of Redbridge Guidance Notes should be consulted in conjunction with this code of practice.

- [GN1- Hand Washing](#)
- [GN2 - Decontamination](#)
- [GN3 - Use of Anaesthetics](#)
- [GN4 – Sharps injuries](#)
- [GN5 - Bench Top Steam Sterilisers](#)