

Electrolysis - Code of practice 11

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 electrolysis activities in addition to those laid down in the regulations prescribing standard conditions applicable to all special treatment licensed premises.

Definitions

For the purposes of this code of practice electrolysis refers to a permanent method of hair removal using needle-like probes. Electrolysis (epilation) works by passing a small amount of energy into the hair follicle through a very fine needle. This produces heat which destroys the cells that produce the hair at the base of the follicle. More than one treatment is necessary due to the fact that hair follicles have a specific growth cycle.

The three types of electrolysis

- Galvanism - The original form of electrolysis by direct current causing a chemical (as opposed to heat) reaction to take place in the follicle.
- Diathermy - The use of short-wave high frequency current which generates a small amount of heat within the hair follicle leading to cauterisation of the blood vessels which nourish hair growth.
- Blend - A combination of diathermy and direct current (or galvanism) is a more up-to-date method of inactivating the hair follicle.

Advanced work electrolysis

Therapists who have been in continuous practice for five years carrying out electrolysis are eligible to be trained to treat telangiectasia (dilated capillaries or thread veins), skin tags, warts etc. These are highly skilled procedures.

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.

Client consultation

- A full client consultation must be carried out at the time of a first visit, this includes the following:
 - medical history
 - skin conditions e.g. psoriasis
 - haemophilia
 - heart disease/pacemaker
 - high blood pressure
 - diabetes
 - seizures e.g. epilepsy
 - immuno-compromised conditions
 - concurrent drug treatments, such as antihistamines, which often have a depressant effect on the brain, steroids and aspirin
 - psychiatric disorders
 - allergies i.e. plasters
 - taking blood thinning medication, e.g. aspirin
- contra indications noted
- areas to be treated
- treatment plan, i.e. duration of sessions, no of sessions and expected results
- potential risk and reactions to the treatment should be discussed

- 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
- consultation records must be held on the premises and be available for inspection by an authorised officer and copies of aftercare advice must be available for inspection

Qualifications

Any person carrying out electrolysis must be suitably qualified in one of the qualifications listed below or equivalent:

- NVQ level 3 unit 16 - remove hair using electrical epilation methods
- CIDESCO diploma
- ITEC diploma in electrology
- City and Guilds level 3
- VTCT
- CIBTAC epilation diplomas

Therapists carrying out electrolysis must also have specific training for the machine that is operated. All therapists carrying out electrolysis should be appropriately supervised in their first year following qualification.

Advanced electrolysis:

- ITEC certificate in red vein treatment
- British Association of Electrolysis advanced work training
- VTCT Level 4 Advanced Epilation Techniques

Any foreign qualifications must be compared to an equivalent UK qualification by a comparability organisation such as UK Naric.

Standard infection control procedures

Staff health

- All staff should be vaccinated against Hepatitis B.
- Single use paper towel or impervious barrier film shall be in place on the couches, equipment liable to contamination and work surfaces in the treatment room.
- Face and eye protection shall be worn where there is a risk of splashing of blood/bodily fluids into the face

Blood spillage

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 them into clinical waste yellow bags
- discard gloves into yellow plastic bag
- wash and dry hands thoroughly
- any contaminated clothes should be handled as little as possible and then only with gloves on
- they should be pre-washed then washed at 64 Celsius for 15 minutes or 70 Celsius for a minimum of three minutes 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

- The therapist should wear a clean uniform, overall or single use apron.
- Hot wash with detergent is sufficient for cleaning work clothes.
- Single use disposable non-powdered vinyl or nitrile gloves should be worn where possible.

General infection control

- A new alcohol wipe should be used for each separate area.
- The pre-sterilised needle packet should be opened carefully taking care not to touch the needle.
- The needle should be inserted into the electrolysis machine without contaminating it.
- To avoid causing local infection areas directly on or near a pimple wound or sore should not be treated.
- Single use disposable equipment must be used where available. Under no circumstances must single use disposable equipment be sterilised for reuse on another client.
- Where possible disposable needle holders should be used to reduce the risk of contamination.
- Single use disposable equipment must not be opened until the therapist is ready to start the procedure and it should be opened in the presence of the client and must be within date. Any packages with their seals not intact should be discarded into the sharps container.
- The needle point must never be touched with bare fingers or any non-sterile material.
- One needle may be used repeatedly on one individual client during an individual treatment.
- If blood is inadvertently drawn when carrying out the treatment, light to moderate pressure should be applied to the area with a clean sterile swab.
- At the conclusion of the procedure, used needles must be placed in the sharps box.
- All cotton swabs and other clinical waste must be placed in clinical waste yellow bags.
- Other contaminated equipment must be placed in a solid container marked dirty immediately after use and then decontaminated as soon as possible afterwards in an autoclave. The layout of any decontamination area for cleaning equipment shall flow along a defined process from dirty through to clean. If manual washing is carried out this shall take place in a dedicated, sink located in a dirty area.
- 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
 - MDA DB 9804 - the validation and periodic testing of bench-top vacuum steam sterilizers

- 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
- 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 and any other contact points. Any surfaces used during treatments must be cleaned with a suitable high-level disinfectant prior to each use.

Aftercare

Clients should be given verbal and written after care advice. This should also include advice of any possible after effects.

Age

Anyone under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. The parent/guardian must sign a consent form at the time of the treatment.

Information/record keeping/consent

Records kept must include steps taken to verify the age of the client eg photocopy of photographic proof of age where appropriate.

Before any treatment takes place, the therapist 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.

Review

This code of practice will 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.

Up to date copies are available by phoning our office on 01895 250191.

Further information

British Association of Electrolysis
40 Parkfield Road
Ickenham
Middx
UB10 8LW

Tel: 01908 503161

e-mail: institute@electrolysis.co.uk

www.electrolysis.co.uk

Guidance on Immunisation against hepatitis B is contained in the UK Health Departments' publication:

- [Immunisation against infectious disease 1996 HMSO, ISBN 0-11-321815-X.](#)

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

- [GN1 - Hand washing](#)
- [GN2 - Decontamination](#)
- [GN4 – Sharps Injury](#)
- [GN3 - The use of anaesthetics](#)
- [GN5 - Bench top steam sterilisers](#)