

Nail treatment businesses



Nail technicians need to put in place infection control practices to prevent infections spreading from one person to another.

About this fact sheet

Nail treatments that involve skin penetration can include cuticle cutting, razor scraping and cuticle pushing.

These skin penetration procedures can damage client's skin and there is a risk of spreading infections between clients. Poor cleaning and hygiene can allow viral, bacterial and fungal infections to be spread by contaminated equipment and surfaces. This can include diseases such as Hepatitis C and B as well as infections of staphylococcal, streptococcal and pseudomonas.

Businesses can find rules for skin penetration procedures in the Public Health Regulation 2022 (the Regulation).

Equipment

- All equipment needs to be in good working order, be cleaned and dried after use and be kept in a clean and dry condition.
- All articles that penetrate the skin must be sterile before use.
- Sterilisation must be carried out in a steam-under-pressure bench top autoclave in line with AS/NZS 4815:2006 *Office-based health care facilities - Reprocessing of reusable medical and surgical instruments and equipment, and maintenance of the associated environment* (see fact sheet titled 'How to clean and sterilise reusable equipment and instruments').
- Equipment that is difficult to clean and sterilise should be single-use.
- If needles are used in skin penetration procedures, they must be sterile, single-use and disposed of into an appropriate sharps container directly after use.
- Articles that are used in a skin penetration procedure but do not penetrate the skin, must be correctly cleaned and kept in a clean condition.
- Clean towels and linen must be used for each new client. Linen should be washed in detergent and hot

water. If an impervious cover is used (such as plastic), it must be cleaned and disinfected before it used for each new client.

- Equipment not used for skin penetration procedures, such as nail buffers and files, need to be cleaned and disinfected after use on each client. It is recommended that single-use equipment is used, or a client's equipment is labelled and stored in a closed, clean container and only reused on the same client.

Business hygiene

- The business must always be kept in a clean condition.
- Treatment areas such as benches must be cleaned between each client and/or a clean covering placed over the treatment surface.
- The business should have documented cleaning and maintenance procedures for the fixtures, fittings and equipment, and staff should be trained in these procedures.
- All waste should be tightly bagged and disposed of daily.
- Sterile packaging should be opened just before starting the treatment.
- Sterile parts of the equipment that will penetrate the skin must not be touched with bare hands. If sterile equipment needs to be touched, a pre-packed sterile alcohol swab, a sterile dry swab, or single-use gloves must be used.
- To prevent cross contamination, all liquids, and creams need to be decanted into single-use containers, and a single-use applicator used for each person.

Personal hygiene for nail technicians

- Nail technicians must wear clean gowns or aprons and single-use gloves during skin penetration procedures.
- Cuts or wounds should be covered with sealed waterproof bandages.
- Hands should be washed:
 - before and after attending to a client
 - before and after a procedure

- after exposure to a body substance
- after touching a client's surroundings
- after the removal of gloves.
- See [Hand Hygiene Australia](#) for additional information on how to wash your hands.

Other requirements

- The business must be registered with the local council, meet all planning and building standards, and have all necessary approvals before opening.
- The business should be designed and constructed so that it can be easily and correctly cleaned (see fact sheet titled 'Skin penetration business design and construction'). Contact the [local council](#) to ensure all local rules have been met.
- Sharps containers must meet AS/NZS 4261:1994 *Reusable containers for the collection of sharp items used in human and animal medical applications*, or AS 4031:1992 *Non-reusable containers for the collection of sharp medical items used in health care areas*.
- [Clinical waste](#) (that is, waste containing any blood or bodily fluids) needs to be disposed of into a clinical waste bin and then collected by a licensed waste contractor.
- Before starting a procedure, it is important to check the client's skin condition. Do not perform a procedure if there are any signs of broken skin (for example, blisters) or infection (for example, tinea).

Fees and penalties

Further action may be taken if a business fails to comply with the Regulation. This may include:

- An Improvement Notice or Prohibition Order accompanied by an administration fee ranging from \$285 to \$295.
- Penalty notices ranging from \$110 to \$1100 for an individual and \$220 to \$2200 for a corporation. Maximum penalties are higher for prosecutions and may include a daily penalty.
- If a Prohibition order is issued, the business must display a copy at or near the entrance to the business where it is clearly visible to customers.
- Prohibition Order reinspections attract a fee of \$255 per hour with a minimum charge of 30 minutes and a maximum charge of 2 hours.

Further advice

- Contact your [local council](#).
- Contact your local [Public Health Unit](#) by calling 1300 066 055.

Further information

The following resources are also available to help skin penetration businesses and practitioners understand the requirements of the *Public Health Act 2010* and Public Health Regulation 2022. Visit our [Skin penetration resources](#) page on the NSW Health website:

Fact sheets

- Beauty, body art and skin penetration industries
- How to clean and sterilise reusable equipment and instruments
- Cleaning and disinfection of footspas
- Skin penetration business design and construction

Poster

- Cleaning and Sterilising reusable equipment and instruments

Video

- [NSW Health Nail and Beauty industry infection control tutorial](#)

Standards

- [AS/NZS 4815:2006](#)