

Body piercing businesses



Body piercing businesses carry out procedures that penetrate the skin, so infection control practices need to be in place to prevent infections spreading from one person to another.

About this fact sheet

Body piercing is a skin penetration procedure where the skin is punctured to create a hole in a part of the body (including the ear and nose), to attach a piece of jewellery to the body.

Poor cleaning and hygiene can allow viral, bacterial and fungal infections to be spread from contaminated equipment and surfaces. This can include diseases such as Hepatitis C and B and other infections including cellulitis, staphylococcal, streptococcal and pseudomonas.

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

Equipment

- Any equipment at the business must be in good working order (no rusted or broken pieces), 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.
- Needles or cannulas that are used in body piercing procedures, must be sterile, single-use and disposed of into an appropriate sharps container.
- Articles that are used in a skin penetration procedure but do not penetrate the skin, must be thoroughly cleaned and kept in a clean condition.

- Clean towels, or other types of 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 prior to each new client.
- Piercing guns must have disposable protective fittings in order to prevent contamination and must only be used for their designed purpose.

Business hygiene

- The business is to 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 are trained in these procedures.
- All waste should be tightly bagged and disposed of daily.
- Sterile packaging should be opened just prior to starting the treatment.
- Sterile parts of equipment that will penetrate the skin should not be touched with bare hands. If handling sterile equipment is necessary, a pre-packed sterile alcohol swab, a sterile dry swab, or sterile single-use gloves should be used.
- The area to be pierced should be cleaned with a skin antiseptic that is approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA).
- Cartridges that hold the jewellery in place during a piercing should be disposed of immediately after the procedure.
- Jewellery used in piercing must be in undamaged pre-sterilised packaging.
- There should be no exchange of jewellery once inserted into an opening until the wound has healed.
- Piercing guns must be cleaned and disinfected with 70% alcohol solution or hospital grade disinfectant and allowed to dry before and after every use.

Personal hygiene for body piercers

- Body piercers must wear a clean gown or apron and single-use gloves during the procedure.
- Cuts or wounds should be covered with a sealed waterproof bandage.
- 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 necessary 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) must be disposed of into a clinical waste bin and then collected by a licensed waste contractor.
- Body piercers cannot, under any circumstances, supply a Schedule 2 product to their clients. Where required or desired, the client can purchase topical anaesthetic medicines (such as Lignocaine 2%, Emla cream and patches, Medijel, and Xylocaine jelly 2%) from a pharmacy and bring it to the salon for their personal use only.
- Schedule 4 prescription only medicines (injectable anaesthetics) can only be supplied and labelled by a medical practitioner and can only be administered by a medical practitioner or a nurse practitioner.
- Body piercing practitioners need to have a very good understanding and knowledge of body piercing and infection control. First aid knowledge is also recommended.
- After care instructions should be provided to the client on cleaning the site and jewellery, infections, healing times and any problems they might experience.

- To minimise the chance of the client having a reaction to the metal in body-piercing jewellery, use jewellery manufactured from surgical stainless steel, titanium, niobium or similar inert metals that have no scratches or irregular surfaces.
- Body piercing practitioners must comply with the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*. For additional information please contact Family and Community Services (FACS) your local police or visit [NSW legislation](#).

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 re-inspections 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
- Beauty treatment businesses
- Skin penetration business design and construction
- How to clean and sterilise reusable equipment and instruments

Poster

- Cleaning and sterilising reusable equipment and instruments

Video

- [NSW Health Body piercing infection control tutorial](#)

Standards

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