

# Code of Practice 7: Body piercing

## 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 body piercing activities in addition to those laid down in the regulations applicable to all special treatment licensed premises.

## Definitions

### Body piercing

This shall include any form of treatment where the client's skin is broken and any article is inserted into the skin with the intention of leaving the article in the skin after treatment.

### Cleaning

This is a physical process which removes soil eg 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.

### Disinfectant

For the purposes of these treatments a high level disinfectant relates to disinfectants capable of reducing the number of bacteria and blood borne viruses including Hepatitis B and 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 a piece of equipment free from viable micro-organisms, ie capable of killing bacteria, fungi, viruses and bacterial spores.

### 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.

### Client consultation

A full client consultation must be carried out at the time of a first visit. This includes the following:

- medical history
- eczema
- psoriasis
- haemophilia
- heat disorders/disease
- blood thinning agents
- high/low blood pressure
- medication
- pregnancy
- breast feeding



- epilepsy
- diabetes
- allergies
- contra indications noted
- area to be treated
- treatment plan
- date of birth of client
- date of treatment
- name of body piercer

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 at the premises and be available for inspection by an authorised officer. Copies of aftercare advice must be available for inspection.

## Staff health

All staff must be vaccinated against Hepatitis B.

## Standard infection control procedures

### 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 yellow clinical waste 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 on a hot cycle 64 Celsius for 15 minutes or 70 Celsius for 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

- Single use disposable plastic aprons should be worn for each client.
- Hot wash with detergent is sufficient for cleaning work clothes.
- Body piercers should routinely wear disposable single use vinyl or latex gloves while carrying 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.

### First aid

- At all times that the premises are used for body piercing, 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 piercing must be suitably qualified in body piercing and be able to show proof of having undergone a two year apprenticeship with an experienced piercer.
- Until such time as an externally verified body piercing qualification is offered all body piercers will be required to have

certified training in the area of hygiene such as level two certificate in salon hygiene offered by the Royal Institute of Public Health or equivalent.

They must also be able to demonstrate the following when questioned by an authorised officer:

- health and safety
- personal hygiene
- infection control
- client consultation
- aftercare advice
- contra-indications

Body piercing procedures should not be carried out by persons under the age of 18 years.

## The body piercing procedure

### Pre-procedure

- Hands should be washed and dried thoroughly.
- Surfaces must clean and free from extraneous matter.
- All equipment not required in the body piercing procedure must be stored in a clean enclosed environment to protect from risk of environmental contamination.
- Arrange required equipment on clean surface and cover until use.
- 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 before any procedure is carried out.
- Marking of skin, the skin should be marked with either disposable pens such as gentian violet or a marked with a cotton bud or such like.
- The sharpness of the needles should not be tested on the operator or the client before use.
- Any instrument accidentally touched by the operator or contaminated in any way must be replaced.

- A sterile dressing should be placed over the pierced area.

### After procedure

- Place used needles or other disposable contaminated waste directly in sharps container/yellow bag immediately after use.
- Place clamps and other reusable contaminated equipment into plastic container marked 'dirty instruments' to await cleaning and ultrasonic bath or, place directly into ultrasonic bath.
- Wipe over work area with alcohol and mild detergent between clients and dry afterwards.
- Wash and dry hands.

### Jewellery

- All jewellery which may come into contact with broken skin or mucous membranes must be sterile.
- Jewellery must be of a suitable size and grade, this means solid 14 carat or 18 carat gold, niobium titanium or platinum.
- This is to minimise the risk of allergic reaction, harbouring of bacteria or adhesion to newly formed skin.
- Grade 316 stainless steel does not comply with the Dangerous Substances and Preparations (Safety) Regulations 2006.

### Cleaning and sterilising of equipment

- Where it is available, single use disposable equipment shall be used e.g. needles, razors.
- Under no circumstances should single use equipment be sterilised and reused on another client.
- 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.
- 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.

### **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 (heavy duty gloves, protective eye wear and disposable plastic apron)
- 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 manufacturer's 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 comes into contact with the skin but does not pierce the skin and cannot be sterilised in an autoclave must be thoroughly cleaned as above then immersed in a suitable high level disinfectant or suitable chemical sterilising solution before and after use on each client.

### **Sterilisation**

- All instruments used in the procedure to pierce a person's skin e.g. clamps, forceps or objects in contact with broken skin, 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.
  - MDA DB 9804 - the validation and periodic testing of bench-top vacuum steam sterilisers

### **Aftercare**

Clients should be given verbal and written after care advice appropriate to the type of piercing they have had. This should also include advice on possible complications.

### **Age**

- Clients must be over the age of 18 for all types of body piercing other than ear, nose, labaret, eyebrow or navel.
- No body piercing shall be administered to any person under the age of 16 with the exception of ear and nose piercing.
- Persons aged between 16 and 18 must provide identification which includes a photograph and date of birth, e.g. passport or driving licence.
- Anyone under the age of 16 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.
- The parent/guardian must sign a consent form at the time of the piercing.
- Piercing of the nipples or genitalia for both sexes under the age of 16 is prohibited.
- Under the Sexual Offences Act 1956 girls and boys under the age of 16 cannot give legal consent to intimate sexual contact under any circumstances therefore this can be regarded as an assault offence.

### **Information/record keeping/ consent**

- Records kept must include steps taken to verify the age of the client, e.g. photocopy of proof of age where appropriate.
- All records must be held on the premises and available for inspection by an authorised officer.

## Informed consent

- Before any piercing takes place, the piercer 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.
- Consent forms must be numbered consecutively.

## Genital piercing

- Consideration should be given to the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985 when considering genital piercing as it could be construed as mutilation and therefore an offence.
- See also age of consent.

## Use of anaesthetics

- Only operators who have attended the appropriate course on use of topical anaesthetics will be permitted to use them.

## 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 and the above details shall be kept at the premises for a period of at least two years.

## 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.

## Further information

### The Royal Institute of Public Health

28 Portland Place, London W1B 1DE

☎ 020 7291 8350

@ exams@RIPH.org.uk

Level 2 Certificate in Salon Hygiene  
(Beauty Therapy)

### Medical Devices Agency

MDA/DTS Orders, Level 9, Hannibal House,  
Elephant and Castle, London SE1 6TQ

- 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 documents are useful references for body piercers:

- The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health 'Body Art, Cosmetic Therapies and other Special Treatments'  
☎ 020 7928 6006  
@ shop@cieh.net
- Health and Safety Executive/Local Authorities Enforcement Liaison Committee (HELA) Sept 2003 - Enforcement of Skin Piercing Activities LAC 76/2

The following Hillingdon Council Guidance Notes should be consulted in conjunction with this code of practice:

- Hand washing
- Decontamination
- Use of Anaesthetics
- Bench Top Steam Sterilisers