



Introduction

Skin penetration businesses and operators are required to achieve a set standard of hygiene and infection control to reduce the possibilities of disease transmission. The [Public Health Act 2010](#) and the [Public Health Regulation 2012](#) outline the legislative requirements for skin penetration procedures being carried out by people who are not registered health professionals.

This manual is aimed to help people working/involved in skin penetration related industries and provides a quick overview to support those involved to comply with the relevant legislative and best practice requirements.

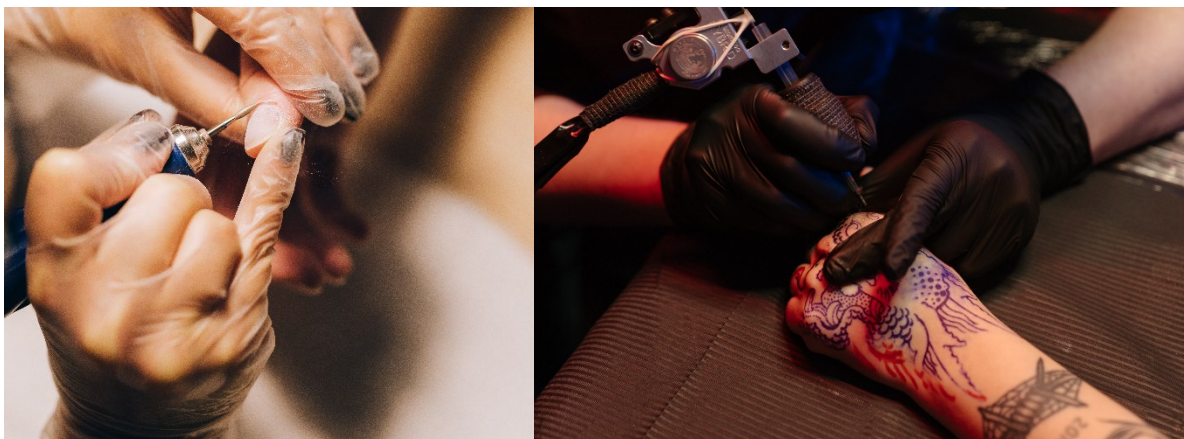
The manual should only be used as a tool and reference for people involved in the industry and does not replace industry-specific guidelines, Acts and Regulations.

What is Skin Penetration?

Skin penetration refers to any process that involves the penetration of the skin or mucous membrane and is commonly carried out for decorative, health or cosmetic purposes.

Below are some common skin penetration procedures that are covered under the NSW Public Health Act 2010:

- acupuncture
- tattooing
- ear Piercing
- colonic Lavage
- hair Removal (Waxing)
- nail Treatments (Manicures/Pedicures)
- microdermabrasion
- electrolysis
- micro pigmentation/cosmetic tattooing (semi-permanent make up)
- any beauty treatment which includes the penetration of skin.



Skin Penetration Related Infections

Once skin is punctured the possibility of infection arises and can be transmitted from one client to another via contaminated equipment and surfaces. It is important that the standards outlined in the *Public Health Act 2010* and the *Public Health Regulation 2012* for hygiene and infection control are complied with by every skin penetration business.

Failure to comply with legislation can result in the risk of transmitting infections such as:

- Herpes
- Hepatitis A, B, C
- Staphylococcus infection
- HIV
- Warts
- Ringworm
- Impetigo, and
- Tinea and other fungal infections.

Infections may occur if:

- Operators do not maintain strict hygiene standards.
- Operators share equipment/materials between customers.
- Re-usable equipment/instruments are not properly cleaned and sterilized.
- Sterile equipment is placed on non-sterile surfaces or incorrectly stored.
- Premise is not maintained to an appropriate standard of cleanliness.
- Single use items are not disposed of after use.

It is also important to note that before commencing some types of skin penetration procedures, skin should be wiped with an appropriate antiseptic and allowed to dry. Examples of suitable antiseptic solutions include 70% W/W ethyl alcohol, 80% V/V ethyl alcohol, alcoholic (isopropyl and ethyl) formulations of 0.5-4% W/V chlorhexidine, or Aqueous or alcoholic formulations of povidone iodine.

North Sydney Council's Skin Penetration Premises Inspections

Council is committed to maintaining the health and wellbeing of our community and visitors to our area through monitoring skin penetration businesses that carry out procedures that may pose a potential public health risk.

Under the Public Health Act, any business carrying out skin penetration procedures operating within the local government area is required to register with Council by logging on to the Council website www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au and completing a Skin Penetration Premises Registration Form.

Business Notification

Under the *Public Health Regulation, 2012*, Council is required to maintain a register of all skin penetration businesses carrying out skin penetration procedures within our area. The register

includes:

- the address and telephone number of the premises;
- the name and contact details of the occupier of the premises;
- the Australian Business Number (ABN);
- the type of skin penetration procedures carried out at the premises;
- details of any inspections carried out by the local government authority for the purposes of the Act.

These details are then used by Council's Environmental Health Officers who are responsible for carrying out inspections of all registered businesses. The register is updated with any inspections carried out by the Officers.

Mobile skin penetration businesses must register with the local government authority in the area which the business owners live. For example, if you run a mobile skin penetration business and live in the North Sydney Council area you must register your business with North Sydney Council.

Fees and charges

The *Local Government Act, 1993* enables Council to charge local skin penetration businesses an annual fee. All fees and charges are formally adopted by Council prior to the beginning of each financial year and are specified in the adopted fees and charges found on Council's website: www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/feescharges

Council will charge a fee for routine inspections and any further required re- inspections. Amendments to fees are made annually after a public exhibition process. Generally, an inspection is performed in a routine nature, although occasionally Council will receive complaints which they must act upon. Every effort is made to ensure the legitimacy of complaints prior to visiting a business. In the event of a complaint, council will inform the business owner of the reason for the inspection.

Authorised Officers

Council's Environmental Health Officer are deemed 'Authorised Officers' under the legislation and hold tertiary qualifications in environmental health related disciplines.

To qualify as an Authorised Officer, Officers must complete an intensive training program. Officers regularly attend specialist courses and briefings to make sure their skills and knowledge are at the forefront of the Environmental Health Industry and best practice.

Inspections

Inspections of skin penetration businesses are carried out by Council's Environmental Health Officers on a risk basis. Inspections are generally undertaken without prior notice. Council's Environmental Health Officers always carry identification and are able to provide proof of identification if requested by the business owner.

Some businesses may be inspected more than once per year, particularly if they have had an

enforcement action taken against them or are carrying out a high-risk activity. Some premises will be inspected every two to three years depending on risk rating and performance.

The performance of a business will determine the number of inspections that will be carried out.

Council's Environmental Health Officers take time during an inspection to discuss any relevant skin penetration legislation and offer professional advice on any skin penetration related matters to business proprietors and their staff.

If a skin penetration business doesn't comply with legislative and Council standards it is possible that Council will initiate action to remedy the situation.

Action may include but is not limited to the following:

- Improvement Notices;
- Prohibition Orders;
- Penalty Infringement Notices; or
- Prosecution in local court.

During an inspection, Council's Environmental Health Officers will look at the following:

➤ **Autoclave:** Officers will review records of autoclave use; this includes date, time, number of items processed, duration, max temperature, and max pressure. These records are to be kept on site for 12 months. Officers will inspect the autoclave to ensure it is not overloaded and all instruments are placed in an open position with only one item per sterilising pouch - more than one item per pouch is only permitted in instances where there is sufficient space to fit more than one item such that no surfaces are touching.

Ask to be shown records which display that the autoclave is serviced regularly and calibrated at least once a year by a qualified service technician; Autoclave must be approved by the Therapeutic Goods Association (TGA);

- **Single use items:** Check that all needles, nail files, nail buffers, wax strips, wax rollers are single use;
- **Re-usable items:** Check that all reusable equipment is being thoroughly cleaned (i.e. scrubbing, washing, or using an ultra-sonic cleaner) and sterilised in an appropriate manner (i.e. autoclaved);
- **Staff Hygiene:** Assess staff hygiene habits; this includes but is not limited to ensuring that staff have access to a hand wash basin with warm running water, liquid soap, single use paper towels, is unobstructed and shows clear signs of being used for handwashing purpose only;
- **Waste Disposal:** Inspect waste/sharps disposal methods. Ensuring that a sharps container which complies with either 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*, the appropriate standard would depend on whether the sharps bin is reusable or single use;

- **Toilets:** Assess the toilet facilities used by staff working at the business;
- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** Ensure that the premise has disposable gloves, linen, gowns, aprons suited to the skin penetration procedure being carried out.
- **General Construction:** Ensuring the premise is appropriately constructed to facilitate the procedures carried out.

Waste

A waste disposal bin must be provided for the disposal of the general and clinical waste produced by the business. A different bin must be used for each type of waste. Clinical waste must be removed by an approved waste contractor.

Use of Sharps/Needles

Needles and sharps are commonly used in various skin penetration procedures and are linked with staff and client exposure to blood borne diseases. Any sharps used during a procedure must be disposed of into a sharp's container immediately after use. Sharps are **NOT** to be reused between skin penetration procedures.



A sharps container which complies with either

- *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*

The appropriate standard would depend on whether the sharps bin is reusable or single use.

Cleaning

Cleaning is important in all premises carrying out skin penetration activities as it is the first step of effective infection control. Cleaning includes ensuring equipment and work surfaces are suitable for the purpose and maintained free of organic materials such as blood and body fluids, as well as dirt and dust.

Equipment Wash

- Rinse off any visible blood and body fluids with warm running water;
- dismantle /open all items as much as possible for cleaning;
- fill the sink with warm water and with the required cleaning agent (approved by the manufacturer). Usually, a neutral pH or mildly alkaline solution is used (e.g. instrument grade detergent). Mildly acidic solutions may damage some instruments;
- place in the sink;
- wash/scrub all surfaces under water with a soft brush, remove stubborn staining by using a non-abrasive scouring pad or soaking in an approved stain-removing solution;

- some instruments should be cleaned using an instrument washer and/or an ultra-sonic cleaner;
- rinse in warm to hot running water; and
- dry all items using a drying cabinet or with a lint free cloth (Instruments must be properly dried prior to being stored away in a clean and dry space).

Wax Pots

Wax pot must be cleaned regularly, and wax must be clear, clean and free of contaminants such as hair. A spatula left on a waxing pot suggests double dipping.



Foot Spas

Foot Spas must be cleaned thoroughly to inhibit the growth of micro-organisms; they should be cleaned and disinfected between each client and at the end of the day.

It is recommended that the spa is soaked using disinfectant overnight once a week.

Alternatively, a single use disposable spa liner can be used but must be disposed of and replaced for each client.



Nb: Foot spas are still required to be drained and cleaned with a cleaning agent despite liners being single use.

Disinfection

Disinfection is a process used to reduce the number of harmful micro-organisms but may not necessarily kill all of them. The premise must have a **hospital grade disinfectant** that can be used to clean re-usable equipment and other areas throughout the shop.

Articles that are used in skin penetration procedures but do not penetrate the skin must be thoroughly cleaned with a neutral pH or mildly alkaline solution (e.g. instrument grade detergent) and hospital grade disinfectant.

Sterilisation

Sterilisation is a process that destroys microorganisms including spores. If re-usable items that penetrate the skin are used, they must be appropriately cleaned and sterilised.

A benchtop steriliser (autoclave) must be available to sterilise the re-usable equipment and must be maintained in accordance with Australian Standard *AS 2181-1998 Sterilizers - Steam - Benchtop*.

The sterilisation process must be carried out in accordance with Australian Standard *AS 4815-2006 Office-based health care facilities - reprocessing of reusable medical and surgical instruments and equipment, and maintenance of the associated environment*.

All autoclaves should be serviced annually by a qualified technician. The technician should place a sticker on the autoclave to remind the business when the next service is due.

UV light cabinets, microwave ovens, pasteurisation, disinfectants, pressure cookers, boiling and ultra-sonic cleaners do not sterilise.

Autoclave Use

- Instruments must be thoroughly scrubbed clean with a neutral pH or mildly alkaline solution (e.g. instrument grade detergent). Some instruments require additional cleaning using an ultrasonic cleaner or oxidising biocide.
- Ensure instruments are properly dried, use a lint free cloth or drying cabinet.
- Open all instruments and place in package (pouch) without overlapping.
- Seal the package properly, do not use staples.
- Label the package.



Common instruments which require sterilisation (autoclaving) include but are not limited to the following:

- cuticle cutters
- razor scrappers
- microdermabrasion heads
- metal nail files
- derma-rollers
- piercing clamps
- any reusable equipment that penetrates the skin during a procedure whether deliberate or not.



Instruments that penetrate the skin and cannot be adequately cleaned and/or sterilised must not be re-used, they must be 'single use'.

Needles (including tattoo needles) must not be re-used. They must be 'single use' and immediately disposed of into an approved sharps container following use on a client.

Record Keeping

It is a requirement that skin penetration premises keep records of sterilisation for reusable instruments.

The following information is required:

- Time and date the item was sterilised;
- the length of time the equipment was sterilised; and
- the temperature of the pressure of the autoclave.

This information is to be kept on site for 12 months, and if requested by an Authorised Officer should be readily available. It is also a recommendation for businesses to keep records of clients. Details such as names, addresses, phone numbers, type of procedure and time/date of procedure.

If reusable equipment is taken off site to be sterilised the *Public Health Regulation 2012* requires that records be kept which outline:

- the date on which each individual piece of equipment was taken off site for sterilisation
- the name and address of the person responsible for the sterilisation.

This information must be kept for at least 12 months.

Personal Hygiene

- A clean gown or apron and single use gloves must be worn by the beautician during a skin penetration procedure (does not apply to hair removal using wax unless there is potential for exposure to any human bodily substances during the procedure).
- **Hands should be washed:**
 - before and after attending a client
 - before and after a procedure
 - after exposure to a body substance
 - after touching a client's surroundings, and
 - after the removal of gloves.
- Cuts or wounds should be covered with a sealed waterproof bandage.

NSW Health factsheets

The following fact sheets are found on the NSW Health website for Skin Penetration Procedures:

- **Cleaning and disinfecting foot spas**

<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/factsheets/Pages/foot-spa.aspx>

- **Beauty Treatment - Hygiene Standards**

<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/factsheets/Pages/beauty-treatment.aspx>

- **Body Piercing - Hygiene Requirements**

<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/factsheets/Pages/body-piercing.aspx>

- **Colonic Lavage (colonic irrigation) - Hygiene Standards**

<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/factsheets/Pages/colonic-lavage.aspx>

- **Hairdressing and Barbers - Hygiene Standards**

<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/factsheets/Pages/hairdressing-hygiene.aspx>

- **Nail Treatment (manicures and pedicures) - Hygiene Standards**

<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/factsheets/Pages/nail-treatment.aspx>

- **Tattooing and other body art - Hygiene Standards**

<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/factsheets/Pages/tattooing.aspx>

- **Waxing - Hygiene Standards**

<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/factsheets/Pages/waxing.aspx>

- **How to Sterilise instruments**

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/factsheets/Pages/how-to-sterilise-instruments.aspx>