

Tattooing and body piercing guidance

PART B – Appendix 11

Decontamination requirements for equipment used in tattooing and skin piercing

Equipment for	Application of item	Recommendations
Tattooing:		
Holders for needles i.e. tube, tip and grip	Hold needles that pierce skin	Dismantle then clean and sterilize, or single-use
Needles and needle bars	Pierce skin	Single-use pre-sterilized
Ink caps	Hold inks that will become contaminated with blood	Single-use
Ink cap trays	Hold ink caps and will become contaminated with blood during use	Either single-use or clean and sterilize
Motors & clipcords	Will become contaminated with blood via the practitioner's hands	Reduce contamination by covering with impervious barrier (e.g. plastic sleeving) Remove impervious barrier carefully after use minimising transfer of contamination to the item Thoroughly remove any visible contamination with detergent, then dry Disinfect surface with 70% alcohol
Elastic bands	Will become contaminated with blood via the practitioner's hands	Single-use
Body piercing:		
Needles, cannulas	Pierce skin	Single use pre-sterilized
Clamps used for skin folds, looped forceps, pliers and receiving tubes	In close contact with pierced skin	Clean and sterilize or single-use
Jewellery	Inserted into sterile body tissues	Sterilize or pre-sterilized
Spatulas, cotton/gauze pads and paper towels	Will become contaminated with blood	Single-use
Vernier calipers	Should only be used on clean, unbroken skin	Clean between uses Single use or autoclavable alternative should be used for oral and genital piercings
Ear piercing guns	These should only be of the type that use single-use self-contained cartridge containing the stud and back, such that the gun itself makes no client contact	Clean according to manufacturer's instructions
Cartridges used with ear piercing guns		Single-use