



## Guidance for Operators: EAR PIERCING

**HEALTH CONCERN:** Microorganisms can infiltrate the tissue under the skin at the piercing site and cause an infection. Equipment /instruments used for ear piercing may become contaminated with blood or body fluids carrying blood-borne diseases such as Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV. You do not have to see blood or body fluids on instruments for transmission of infection to occur.

### LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Personal Service Settings (PSS) are required to operate in compliance with **Ontario Regulation 136/18: Personal Service Settings**.

Operators and staff of personal service settings are encouraged to review the **Guide to Infection Prevention and Control in Personal Service Settings** from Public Health Ontario to learn more about infection prevention and control practices that reduce the risk of transmission of infections in PSS.

### INFORMED CONSENT

Prior to service, operators must provide clients with an explanation of the procedure and information about any risks associated with the procedure. The service provider must keep a record to document that the information was provided.

### OPERATOR HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Wear gloves during service.
- Wash hands before putting gloves on and after taking them off.
- Practice good personal hygiene.
- Do not eat, drink or smoke during service.
- SWPH recommends that all operators be vaccinated against Hepatitis B.

### SKIN PREPARATION

- Do not provide service to clients who have cuts, wounds, rashes or visible skin infections within 6 inches of the area that is being worked on.
- If marking skin with single-use marker or toothpick, mark skin and when the mark dries, apply skin antiseptic.

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## SKIN PREPARATION

- Prior to the procedure, apply skin antiseptic. Skin antiseptics include, but isn't limited to:
  - o Povidone-iodine solution
  - o Isopropyl alcohol (50 - 91%)
  - o Ethyl alcohol (60 - 95%)
- If applicable, a topical local anesthetic can be used after applying a skin antiseptic.

## POST-TREATMENT SKIN CARE

- Wipe the pierced area with an approved skin antiseptic.
- If an ointment or lubricant is used, it must be dispensed in a manner that prevents contamination i.e. no double dipping.
- Clients must be given verbal and written aftercare instructions which must include:
  - o Clean hands immediately before touching the site
  - o Cover the modified area, where applicable, with a single-use dressing intended to cover wounds
  - o The expected healing time of the site
  - o Description of possible complications and their signs and symptoms
  - o Advice on how to deal with slight redness, pain, or swelling
  - o Recommendation to consult with a health care provider within 24 hours if any signs of an infection develop following the procedure

## INSTRUMENTS AND EQUIPMENT

- Ear piercing guns/devices are not to be used on any other part of the body except the ear lobes (fleshy part only).
- Ear piercing guns/devices without sterile, single use disposable plastic cartridges that come in direct contact with the ear must be cleaned and sterilized between each client use. See [Sterilization Fact Sheet](#) for more information.

- Ear piercing guns/devices without disposable adapters or cartridges are not recommended.

## CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

### Cleaning

- All instruments, equipment and surfaces that require cleaning, disinfection or sterilization **MUST** be completely disassembled first. Items must then be cleaned in warm water with soap or detergent.
- Linens must be laundered after use. There should be an adequate supply available.
- Routine cleaning of walls, floors, ceilings and surfaces are to be maintained.

### Disinfection

- All Disinfectants must be made fresh daily or according to manufacturer's instructions. All disinfectants must have a drug identification number (DIN) or a natural product number (NPN) issued by Health Canada.

## WASTE DISPOSAL

- Throw waste that has blood and/or body fluids on it in a leak-proof bag.
- Throw out single-use tools and equipment after use.
- Single-use sharps must be thrown out in an approved sharps container which meets the standards of Canadian Standards Association.
- Sharps containers are to be sealed and replaced when the contents reach the fill line marked on the container or when three-quarters full.

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LEVEL	WHEN TO USE	EXAMPLES
Low Level Disinfection	Equipment and instruments or items that do not directly contact the client or contact only hair or intact skin.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Service tray</li><li>• Environmental surfaces</li><li>• Instrument container</li></ul>
Intermediate Level Disinfection	Equipment, instruments, or items that are intended to contact only intact skin, but that may accidentally come into contact with non-intact skin or mucous membranes or penetrate the skin.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Calipers</li></ul>
High Level Disinfection	Any surfaces, equipment or tools that may come in contact with blood.	

See [Disinfection Chart](#) for information on approved disinfectants and contact time.

## RECORD KEEPING

### Client Records

- Before providing service, the PSS must obtain and record the following information:
  - o Client's name and contact information
  - o Name of service provider
  - o Record what service the client received
  - o Record that the client was provided an explanation of the procedure and risks
  - o Dates of the procedure
  - o Lot numbers and expiry date of the pre-packaged sterile equipment

### High Level Disinfectants

- If using high level disinfectants, PSS are required to record information outlined in the [Disinfection Record Log](#).

### Accidental Blood or Body Fluid Exposures

- PSS are required record all accidental blood or body fluid exposures. Records must include information outlined in the [Accidental Blood Exposure Log](#).

### Record Retention

- Records must be kept onsite for one year. After the first year, the records must be retained and kept readily available in a secure location for at least two years.

## QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions, please contact your area Public Health Inspector at **1-800-922-0096**.

## MORE INFORMATION

1-800-922-0096 | [www.swpublichealth.ca](http://www.swpublichealth.ca)

### Southwestern Public Health

**St. Thomas Site**  
519-631-9900

**Woodstock Site**  
519-421-9901