

Personal Service Establishments

Ear Piercing Services:

What you need to know as an Ear Piercing Operator

Why is this information useful to you?

- to meet health requirements
- to help protect both your health and your clients
- to help you keep a clean salon that can attract repeat business

What are the health requirements in BC?

In Fraser Health, facilities that provide ear piercing services are subject to regular inspections by the health department. Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) conduct inspections of ear piercing facilities to ensure your facility meets health requirements. EHOs also follow up public complaints on a facility.

During an inspection Environmental Health Officers will be looking to see if you:

- clean and disinfect work areas in your facility
- clean and disinfect equipment and instruments
- practice good personal hygiene

The Personal Service Establishments Regulation (BC Reg 188/88), Guidelines for Personal Service Establishments and Guidelines for Ear and Body Piercing outline the standards for cleaning, disinfection and hygiene practices to help lower health risks.

For a copy of the Personal Service Establishments Regulation and Guidelines visit: www.fraserhealth.ca/pse

What are the health risks if you don't follow the requirements?

The most common methods used for ear piercing include using a hollow sterile needle method or an ear piercing gun. Ear piercing can lead to health risks for both you and your clients if infection control practices are not followed and/or proper ear piercing equipment is not used.

You do not have to see blood or body fluids on instruments for an infection to occur.

For example, bacterial infections and blood borne diseases can occur from:

- unclean ear piercing equipment (such as ear piercing guns or needles),
- unclean work surfaces and
- poor personal hygiene.

Specific health risks associated with ear piercing can include:

- skin infections including redness, pain, swelling and puss-like discharge,
- blood borne diseases such as Hepatitis B and C, Tetanus and HIV, and
- allergic reactions to some ear piercing jewelry (i.e. brass or nickel).



Your clients expect a clean and safe ear piercing facility

Your business may be affected by "word of mouth" advertising.

- Impact can be negative if a client has a bad experience or gets an infection from an ear piercing provided at your facility and tells others about it.
- Impact can be positive if a client is happy with your service and recommends it to others.
- Clients are concerned about their health and that you follow proper practices.

In addition, health inspection results are posted on the Fraser Health website as public information.

- Clients can use inspection results to make an informed decision to choose a facility for their ear piercing.
- To view the latest Fraser Health Inspection reports visit: www.fraserhealth.ca/pse

Checklist: For Ear Piercing Operators

Use the following checklist to:

- help prevent health risks and
 - help you meet the Personal Service Establishments Regulation and Guideline requirements.
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- Construction of the facility must meet the local health department requirements. For example:
 - *All work surfaces should be made of materials that are easy to clean.*
 - *Ensure a hand washing station with hot and cold running water is provided.*
 - *Carpet is not allowed in work areas.*
 - *All plumbing fixtures must meet BC Building Code and municipal requirements.*
 - *Premise should be separate from incompatible business/activities.*
 - Follow good personal hygiene practices.
 - *Wash your hands before and after every client.*
 - *Provide liquid soap and single use towels for hand washing.*
 - *Use single use gloves for each ear piercing and throw away gloves after each client. Glove use does not replace hand washing.*
 - *Do not eat, drink or smoke at your work station.*
 - Examine the client's ear for signs of infection, or other irregularities. Do not provide piercing if these are found.
 - *Prepare the area to be pierced by cleaning with an approved skin antiseptic such as 70% alcohol or betadine.*
 - If piercing needles are used then they must be pre-sterilized single use needles.
 - New or disinfected ear piercing guns and instruments should be stored separately from used or soiled guns and instruments.
 - Specialized ear piercing guns should only be used for piercing of the earlobe.
 - *The ear piercing gun should only be used for the fleshy part of the earlobes.*
 - *The ear piercing gun used for other areas such as the ear cartilage, nasal cartilage or the navel has been associated with tissue damage (crushing of the cartilage) that may lead to infection and/or ear deformities.*
 - Ear piercing guns designed with pre-sterilized, disposable cartridges are highly recommended.
 - *The gun should be designed to insert a pre-packaged single use sterilized ear piercing stud into the earlobe at the same time with piercing.*
 - *Ensure cartridges are disposed of after each client.*
 - *All parts of the ear piercing gun that are in direct contact with clients skin, blood or body fluids should be disinfected before and after use.*
 - Work contact surfaces must be cleaned and disinfected before and after each client.
 - Use the correct level of disinfection for ear piercing guns, equipment and work surfaces.
 - *Refer to Guidelines for Personal Service Establishments to help you decide the level of disinfection and the type of disinfection product that is required.*
 - *Always follow manufacturer's directions when using cleaning and disinfection products.*
 - Provide client(s) both verbal and written instructions for after care of their ear piercing.
 - *Clients should be advised to consult with their doctor in case of an infection.*
 - Throw away all waste properly.
 - *If single use needles are used for piercing, these must be thrown away in an appropriate sharps container.*
 - Ensure washrooms are clean and maintained.
 - *Provide liquid soap and use single towels for hand washing.*
 - *Note that additional information may be requested by your local Environmental Health Officer.*

For further information, or if you have any questions, contact your local Environmental Health Services office.

Website: www.fraserhealth.ca/healthprotection