

TATTOOING ESTABLISHMENTS

North Carolina state law requires that a [permit](#) be obtained from the local Health Department before engaging in the practice of tattooing. Physicians, and those working under the supervision of physicians in the normal course of their professional practice, are exempt.

The Rules governing tattooing in North Carolina can be found here:

<http://www.deh.enr.state.nc.us/ehs/quality/spt.htm>

Every tattoo artist approved by the department must operate in a location which meets the requirements of the tattoo rules regarding the construction and maintenance of the facility, separation of the tattoo room from other areas, furniture, fixtures, equipment, lavatories, water, sewer and waste disposal.



Prior to construction/remodeling of a tattooing facility, plans must be submitted to this department to scale with the location of all equipment, wall/divider placement, hand sinks, bathrooms and floor, walls, and ceiling finishes. Please note, that the facility shall meet all the Rules Governing the Sanitation of Tattoo Establishment, hereinafter referred to as 15A NCAC 18A section .2600. A plan review fee is also required along with contact sheet.

It is the responsibility of the owner or operator to meet all building codes, zoning ordinances, fire, tax and other laws, rules and ordinances. Nothing in these rules shall be interpreted to exempt any tattoo operation from the rules or ordinances of other agencies.

The facility must be either hooked up to a public water system or well water. If the facility is connected to well water, then a water sample must be taken prior to opening.

Sewage shall be disposed of into either a proper onsite sewage system or public waste water system. If your facility has an onsite sewage system, a tank check is required to ensure that the existing system is sized properly.



Establishments are required to use an autoclave to sterilize their needles, needle bars and guides, and other equipment which is exposed to blood and body fluids and subsequently reused. Needles are required to be disposed after use.

The autoclave must be tested for proper function monthly by submitting a control and test sample for evaluation by a laboratory.

Equipment is stored in the sterile container in which it

is autoclaved and opened only when the artist is ready to begin the procedure.

The artist must employ aseptic technique to avoid contaminating the equipment as the tattooing apparatus is assembled.

Inks and dyes are kept in clean containers protected from contamination. Dye must be dispensed into individual containers before beginning the procedure. After the procedure, any remaining dye is discarded.



Single-service stencils are required. Many tattoo shops use stencil duplicators to produce the stencil that will be used to transfer the design to the skin in outline before beginning to instill the dye into the skin.

The artist must wear disposable surgical gloves for each procedure after scrubbing hands and forearms for five minutes at the beginning of the day and for two to three minutes between each patron. The artist must wear clean disposable gowns or lap cloths for each patron.

All materials used in the tattoo procedure must be disposed of in biohazard containers or sterilized in the autoclave.

