

**RULES GOVERNING
TATTOOING
15A NCAC 18A .3200**

**North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Public Health
Environmental Health Section**

**Effective April 1, 1995
Amended Effective November 1, 2002**

All Environmental Health Rules may be accessed online at:
<http://ehs.ncpublichealth.com/rules.htm>

SECTION .3200 - TATTOOING

15A NCAC 18A .3201 DEFINITIONS

The following definitions shall apply throughout this Section:

- (1) "Blood and Body Fluid Precautions" means a method of infection control in which all human blood and body fluids are treated as if known to be infectious for human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), hepatitis B virus (HBV), and other infections that can be transmitted by contact with blood.
- (2) "Department" means the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. The term also means the authorized agent of the department.
- (3) "Sharps" means any objects that can penetrate the skin including, but not limited to, needles, razor blades, scalpels, and broken capillary tubes.
- (4) "Sterilize" means the approved microbicidal treatment by a process which provides enough accumulative heat or concentration of chemicals for a length of time sufficient to eliminate the microbial count, including pathogens.
- (5) "Tattooing" means tattooing as defined in G.S. 130A-283.
- (6) "Tattoo Artist" means any person who engages in tattooing.
- (7) "Tattoo Establishment" means any location where tattooing is engaged in or where the business of tattooing is conducted or any part thereof. For purposes of this Section, "Tattoo Parlor" falls within this definition.
- (8) "Tattooing Room" means a room in the tattoo establishment where tattooing is performed.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 130A-29;
Temporary Adoption Eff. January 1, 1995, for a period of 180 days or until the permanent rule becomes effective, whichever is sooner;
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Pursuant to G.S. 150B-21.3A, rule is necessary without substantive public interest Eff. July 20, 2019.*

15A NCAC 18A .3202 PERMITTING

- (a) Every person engaged in the practice of tattooing shall register with their local health department on or before January 1, 1995, by providing their name, the address of the location at which they engage in tattooing, and their hours of operation.
- (b) No person shall engage in tattooing on or after June 1, 1995, without first obtaining a tattooing permit issued by the department. Persons permitted to engage in tattooing in counties with local rules shall obtain a tattooing permit from the department on or after June 1, 1995. Nothing herein shall preclude counties with local rules from permitting tattoo artists prior to June 1, 1995, at which time all tattoo artists shall be permitted by the department.

(c) No tattooing permit shall be issued to a person until an inspection by the department verifies compliance with this Section.

(d) Tattooing permits shall be issued in the name of the individual tattoo artist, shall list the address of the tattoo establishment where the artist will practice, and shall not be transferable to another person or place of practice.

(e) A valid tattooing permit shall be posted in the premises of the tattoo establishment in a conspicuous place where it may be easily observed by the public upon entering the establishment.

(f) Application for a tattooing permit shall be submitted to the local health department. The application shall include at least the following information:

- (1) Name of tattoo artist;
- (2) Mailing address of tattoo artist;
- (3) Name of tattoo establishment;
- (4) Street address of tattoo establishment;
- (5) Anticipated date of commencing operation; and
- (6) Signature of tattoo artist.

(g) Any additional information requested by the department to verify compliance with this Section shall be submitted with the permit application. An initial application for issuance of a tattooing permit shall be submitted no less than 30 days before anticipated commencement of tattooing by the artist within the jurisdiction of the local health department issuing the permit. Application for renewal of an existing tattooing permit shall be submitted to the local health department at least 30 days prior to the expiration date of the existing permit.

(h) Any permit application fee established by the local board of health shall be paid upon submission of the application.

History Note: Authority G.S. 130A-29;

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Pursuant to G.S. 150B-21.3A, rule is necessary without substantive public interest Eff. July 20, 2019.

15A NCAC 18A .3203 WATER SUPPLY

(a) The water supply serving a tattoo establishment shall be an approved potable water supply. Public water supplies that meet the requirements of 15A NCAC 18C shall be approved.

(b) When a public water supply is not available and a private water supply is used, the water supply for a tattoo establishment shall be located, constructed, maintained, and operated in accordance with the Rules Governing the Protection of Private Water Supplies, 15A NCAC 18A .1700.

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15A NCAC 18A .3204 SEWAGE DISPOSAL

Sewage shall be disposed of in accordance with 15A NCAC 18A .1900 or 15A NCAC 2H .0200.

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15A NCAC 18A .3205 SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT AND DISPOSAL

Solid waste management and disposal for tattoo establishments shall be in accordance with 15A NCAC 13B.

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15A NCAC 18A .3206 RECORDS, HEALTH REQUIREMENTS FOR PATRONS

- (a) Retrieval records for each patron shall be kept by the tattoo artist. The patron shall be required to record or verify their name, address, phone number, date of birth, and provide their signature.
- (b) Records shall be kept for a minimum of two years and shall be made available to the department on demand.
- (c) No person with visible jaundice (yellowing of the eyes or skin) shall be tattooed.
- (d) No tattooing shall be done on skin surface that has a rash, pimples, boils, infections, or manifests any evidence of being reddened or inflamed.

History Note: Authority G.S. 130A-29;
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15A NCAC 18A .3207 CONSTRUCTION

- (a) Each tattoo establishment shall have at least one tattooing room. This room shall be separate and apart from all other areas in the establishment, and access to this room shall be restricted. Patrons shall be tattooed only in the tattooing room, and there shall be a separate work station for each patron within the tattooing room. Furniture and furnishings within the tattooing room shall be constructed to be easily cleanable, maintained in good repair, and kept clean.
- (b) At least one lavatory with mixing faucets supplied with hot and cold running water under pressure shall be provided for every five artists for hand washing and utensil washing. Lavatories shall be accessible to the tattooing room such that tattoo artists can wash their hands and return to the tattoo room without having to touch anything with their hands. Access to these lavatories shall be restricted to the tattoo artists. Each lavatory shall be easily cleanable, in good repair, and kept free of storage.
- (c) Poisons, including germicidal solutions, used in the tattoo establishment shall be stored in covered containers with labels identifying the contents.
- (d) The tattooing room shall be maintained clean and in good repair. The floor of the tattooing room shall be of impervious material and shall be maintained in clean condition at all times.

History Note: Authority G.S. 130A-29;

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15A NCAC 18A .3208 OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

- (a) Antiseptic soap and a germicidal solution shall be available to each tattoo artist. Individual hand scrub brushes and fingernail files or orange sticks for each tattoo artist shall also be available. Before tattooing the first patron of the day, each tattoo artist shall scrub his hands and forearms with an antiseptic soap and warm water for five minutes using a clean individual hand brush and an individual file or orange stick for his fingernails; and he shall repeat this process for two to three minutes before tattooing each subsequent patron that day. An individual disposable towel shall be used for drying the tattoo artist's hands and arms after rinsing. Each tattoo artist shall wear clean disposable latex surgical gloves and a clean or disposable gown or coat or a clean or disposable lap cloth while engaged in tattooing. Gloves must be changed between patrons and disposed of after each use. There shall be no use of tobacco

or other smoking materials in the tattooing room, and there shall be no eating of food or drinking of beverages in the tattooing room by the tattoo artist.

(b) Tattooing instruments and other equipment shall be cared for as follows:

- (1) All clean and ready-to-use instruments, dyes, carbons, and stencils shall be kept in a closed container, case, or storage cabinet while not in use. The storage cabinet shall be maintained in a sanitary manner at all times. Sterile instruments shall be kept in sterile packages or containers;
- (2) Only disposable needles shall be used in the tattooing process, and a new needle or set of needles shall be used on each patron;
- (3) Autoclaving shall be used for sterilization of the needle bar tube and needle bar of the tattoo machine before use on each patron. The needle bar tube of the tattooing machine shall be cleaned after each use and before being sterilized for use with the next patron;
- (4) The needles and instruments required to be sterile shall be handled with aseptic technique during the tattooing procedure so they are not contaminated before use; and
- (5) The effectiveness of the autoclave in killing bacterial endospores shall be tested once each month by using an endospore-impregnated strip. Results of this test shall be recorded for review annually by the department.

(c) All sharps, including the needles after removal from the needle bar, shall be stored and disposed of in containers that are rigid, puncture-resistant, and leak-proof when in an upright position.

(d) Blood and body fluid precautions shall be practiced by the tattoo artist when the potential for contact with blood and body fluids exists in any procedure.

History Note: Authority G.S. 130A-29;

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15A NCAC 18A .3209 TATTOOING PROCEDURES

(a) Sterilized or new disposable razors shall be used for each patron when it is necessary to shave the area to be tattooed.

(b) The site of the tattoo shall be cleaned with a germicidal solution, which shall be applied in a circular, centrifugal manner before the design is placed on the skin. If the area to be tattooed is shaved, this cleaning shall be performed after shaving the area. Any other sterile, individual towels or gauze that are used in preparing the site to be tattooed shall be properly disposed of after use on each patron.

(c) The use of styptic pencils, alum blocks, or other solid styptics to control bleeding is prohibited unless a separate, disposable styptic is used for each patron.

(d) If a stencil is used, only clean disposable stencils for transferring the design to the skin shall be used, and no stencil may be used on more than one patron.

(e) Single-service individual containers of dye or ink shall be used for each patron and the container shall be discarded immediately after completing work on a patron. Any dye or ink in which the needles were dipped shall be treated likewise so as not to be used on another person.

(f) After completing the tattoo, the tattooed area shall be cleaned with a clean facial tissue or paper towel, and an antibacterial ointment may be applied. The area shall then be covered with a sterile dressing.

History Note: Authority G.S. 130A-29;
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15A NCAC 18A .3210 INSECT, RODENT AND VECTOR CONTROL

The premises shall be kept clean and free of vermin at all times. There shall be no fly or mosquito breeding places or rodent harborage on the premises. Non-human animals shall not be allowed in the tattooing room. Litter under the control of the tattoo artist or operator shall not be permitted to accumulate on the premises.

History Note: Authority G.S. 130A-29;
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15A NCAC 18A .3211 PROCEDURE WHEN INFECTION SUSPECTED

All infections resulting from the practice of tattooing which become known to the tattoo artist shall be reported to the local health department by the tattoo artist within 48 hours.

History Note: Authority G.S. 130A-29;
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15A NCAC 18A .3212 PERMIT REVOCATION

The Department may suspend or revoke permits in accordance with G.S. 130A-23.

History Note: Authority G.S. 130A-23; 130A-29;

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