



Body Art Safety

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Fast facts

Hennepin County's Ordinance 23 requires Public Health Protection to regulate and license body art studios in order to:

- ▲ Prevent disease transmission.
- ▲ Correct and prevent conditions that may adversely affect customers.
- ▲ Provide standards for the design, construction, operation, and maintenance of body art establishments.
- ▲ Meet consumer expectations for safety.

What are body art studios?

Body art studios offer body piercing and tattooing.

What is Hennepin County's role with body art studios?

Since tattooing and body piercing break a person's skin, there is the possibility of transmitting diseases or infections such as Hepatitis or even AIDS. Although the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have reported few transmissions from body piercing or tattooing, it is a public health issue and is monitored by the Public Health Protection unit of Hennepin's Human Services and Public Health Department.

In June 2003, Hennepin County passed Ordinance 23 that requires the health division to regulate and license body art studios. (The ordinance does not apply to ear piercing or medical or dental procedures.)

Health staff monitor and work with body art staff to ensure that health and safety requirements are met. Are the tools, sink and other utensils clean and sanitary? Are needles and jewelry sterile? Are standard precautions for disease prevention, such as wearing latex gloves and properly disposing of needles, being followed?

In addition to monitoring the studio's health and safety requirements, Hennepin requires that people who tattoo or body pierce be certified by a course in disease prevention. They must also provide proof of practical training in order to be licensed by the county.

Hennepin's ordinance also spells out a variety of safety factors. For example, body art staff may not perform a body art procedure while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Conversely, no one who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol can receive a tattoo or body piercing.

The county ordinance also prohibits the practice of branding, cutting, suspension or scarification of the skin or body.

Body art and youth: Get permission

In Hennepin, it is a misdemeanor to tattoo a person under the age of 18 without parental consent. A juvenile must have written permission from both parents before being tattooed and from at least one parent before being pierced. Minors must give proof of age and be accompanied by a parent who must give written permission at the studio. Genitalia or nipple tattoos or piercing is prohibited on minors regardless of parental consent.