



MECKLENBURG COUNTY

Health Department

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Health Director

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Tattoo Artist Permitting and Operation

The practice of tattooing is regulated in North Carolina by state rules (**15NCAC 18A .3200**). The Mecklenburg County Health Department locally enforces these rules. Tattooing is defined as “the inserting of permanent markings or coloration, or the producing of scars, upon or under human skin, through puncturing by use of a needle or any other method.”

PERMITTING

Persons who intend to practice as a tattoo or permanent makeup artist in Mecklenburg County should first contact the Health Department so staff can review all the minimum requirements with prospective artists. If the person then determines that they wish to continue the application process, they should complete the permit application form provided and submit, along the specified permit fee, to this office at least 30 days before their proposed tattooing commencement date. The annual fee is \$225.00 for the initial permit. Permits must then be renewed annually at a cost of \$125.00. Once the completed application and fee are received, an onsite review of the proposed location should be scheduled with the Health Department. There is no fee for this review and it can prevent delays in obtaining a tattoo permit as well prevent the costly replacement of equipment the applicant might purchase that does not meet state requirements. Once the location and operations receive approval, an inspection can be scheduled.

BASIC OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

The NC tattoo rules require tattoo and permanent makeup artists to meet minimum sanitation standards. These include, but are not limited to:

- an autoclave for sterilizing tattoo implements
- a sink or sinks for hand washing
- providing a clean facility/studio with floors, walls, ceilings, and fixtures in good repair
- maintenance of records of clients & autoclave tests
- approved water supply and sewage disposal
- proper storage and disposal of solid waste

Each artist must be able to demonstrate knowledge of proper aseptic technique to the Health Department. There is no testing of artistic ability. For a full text of the NC tattoo rules, go to: <http://ehs.ncpublichealth.com/faf/pti/tattoos.htm>.

Once a **PASSING** inspection is completed by the Health Department, the tattoo or permanent makeup artist will receive an operating permit. Tattooing permits are issued to a specific individual at a specific location and **are not transferrable**. The tattoo studio or shop and the individual artist must both meet certain requirements, but the actual permit is issued to the individual artist. An artist who practices at more than one studio, or who moves to another studio, must get a new permit at each studio location. Apprentices cannot work under an artist’s permit as they must have their own permits.

BODY PIERCING

There are no public health laws or regulation on body piercing in North Carolina. A law does exist on age requirements for piercing and are enforced under local law enforcement agencies (N.C. General Statute 14-400).

For additional information contact:

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