

**APPLYING FOR A  
TATTOOING LICENCE  
Basic information**

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## Introduction

In recent years, the number of applications by persons interested in setting up a tattoo studio increased considerably. This may be due to fashion, advertising and trends. These guidelines aim to provide information related to the requirements and procedure when applying for a licence to operate a tattoo studio and practice tattooing. The 'conditions of licence' attached to a Tattoo licence are also included. Forms to be completed by the tattooist are annexed to this document. It is good to note that a tattooing licence issued by the Superintendence of Public Health as provided for in the [Control of Tattooing Act Chapter 270](#), will reflect both the practicing tattooist and the premises that the tattooist will be practicing in.

### 1. General information

- a. In Malta, tattooing is regulated through – [The Control of Tattooing Act Chapter 270](#)
- b. Tattooing is to be performed **ONLY** by licenced tattooists;
- c. It is illegal for a person to have in his possession or under his control any instrument, colouring material or other objects used for the purpose of tattooing, unless such person is in possession of a valid licence;
- d. A valid tattooing licence shall be displayed in a conspicuous place within the waiting room of the tattoo studio where it may be easily observed by the public upon entering the establishment;
- e. The licensing office for tattoo studios and tattooists is at the Health Care Standards Directorate within the Health Regulation Department;
- f. Opening Hours are from 7am till 2.45 pm Monday to Friday;
- g. Contact details are as follows:
  - Ms Simone Schembri – Tel: 25953330 e-mail [simone.schembri@gov.mt](mailto:simone.schembri@gov.mt) (Inspection appointments, payment, collection of licences)
  - Ms Silvana Attard – Tel: 25953324 e-mail [silvana.attard@gov.mt](mailto:silvana.attard@gov.mt) (payment of licences);
  - Mr Mark Tonna – Tel: 25953343 e-mail [mark.tonna@gov.mt](mailto:mark.tonna@gov.mt) (Procedure to apply for a new licence/ documents required to apply);
- h. Further information can be accessed from:  
<http://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/hcs/Pages/hcs.aspx>

### 2. The premises

- a. Premises must have a PA permit;
- b. It is requested that licenced premises are kept clean, in good condition and in a good state of repair;
- c. A tattoo studio must be composed of a separate waiting room and a working area. These two areas are to be totally segregated from each other. When a new tattoo studio is being planned, the working area of the tattoo studio should only have access through the waiting room. Any plans for additional services **MUST** be included in the site plan submitted with the initial application;
- d. Adequate lighting and ventilation must be available all throughout the premises;
- e. The actual tattooing area must not be visible from the waiting room or the outside of the studio;
- f. The studio walls have to be painted with water repellent paint for easy cleaning;

- g. Toilet facilities must be available;
- h. Premises must have an efficient drainage system;
- i. An 18+ sign should be affixed at the main entrance of the studio;
- j. Another sign denoting that **'No person under the age of 18 years can request any form of tattooing even with the consent of the parents/guardians'** must be affixed in the waiting room;
- k. Fire-fighting equipment must at least consist of a fire extinguisher bearing a valid expiry date;
- l. **IT IS OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE THAT A VALID PAID LICENCE IS DISPLAYED AT ALL TIMES.**

### **3. The work station**

- a. Work surfaces must be kept clean and in a good state of repair, which must be washed with hot soapy water and wiped with a 70% Alcohol solution. Work tops should be of an impervious material;
- b. Paper towels must be available at all times;
- c. There should be sufficient bench space to accommodate equipment;
- d. A wash hand basin must be available within easy reach of each workstation and must be kept in a good state of repair, clean and connected to the main drainage system. Single lever taps must have a supply of hot and cold water;
- e. Soap/suitable detergent and adequate drying facilities such as paper towels are to be provided near the wash hand basin;
- f. Client couches must be upholstered with an impervious type of material, which can be easily cleaned. Multiple couches must have a fixed partition between them for adequate client privacy;
- g. No more than two tattoo licences can be approved for each couch available within the studio;
- h. A proper sharps container must be available within each work station;
- i. A foot operated pedal bin, covered with a disposable garbage bag must be available in each working station.

### **4. Lavatory facilities**

- a. Lavatory facilities must be communicated with the main drainage system and must be kept clean at all times;
- b. There must be a proper functioning flushing apparatus;
- c. The wash hand basin within the lavatory room must have a supply of hot and cold water;
- d. Adequate hand washing/drying facilities must be available at all times;
- e. Proper ventilation must be present within the lavatory facilities (natural or mechanical);
- f. The lavatory facilities must have adequate lighting;
- g. Where possible lavatory facilities are to be accessible from the waiting room.

### **5. Tattooing instruments and other equipment**

- a. 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. Tattoo tubes and needles should be kept in their original box before use and all product information must be retained;

- b. New disposable tattooing needles shall be used on each client. It must be ensured that all purchased disposables/consumables carry a brand, batch number, lot number and expiry date. Such information must be found both on the outer box and also on the wrapping of each individual item;
- c. If an autoclave is in use, a vacuum type B autoclave must be available and the efficiency of the autoclave must be regularly tested. Results of such tests shall be recorded for review during inspection. The needle bar tube and needle bar of the tattoo machine must be autoclaved before use on each client. Used needle bar tube must be cleaned after use and before autoclave with appropriate and approved detergents;
- d. All individually wrapped and sterile instruments must have an expiry date on each wrapper;
- e. All sharps, including needles after removal from the needle bar, shall be disposed of in containers that are rigid, puncture-resistant, and leak-proof, which must be kept in an upright position. An approved Class D waste collector must collect clinical waste;
- f. Any licenced tattooist selling tattoo ink, needles or any other items related to tattooing and body piercing to the public or to any other tattooists must be compliant with the Malta Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority regulations.

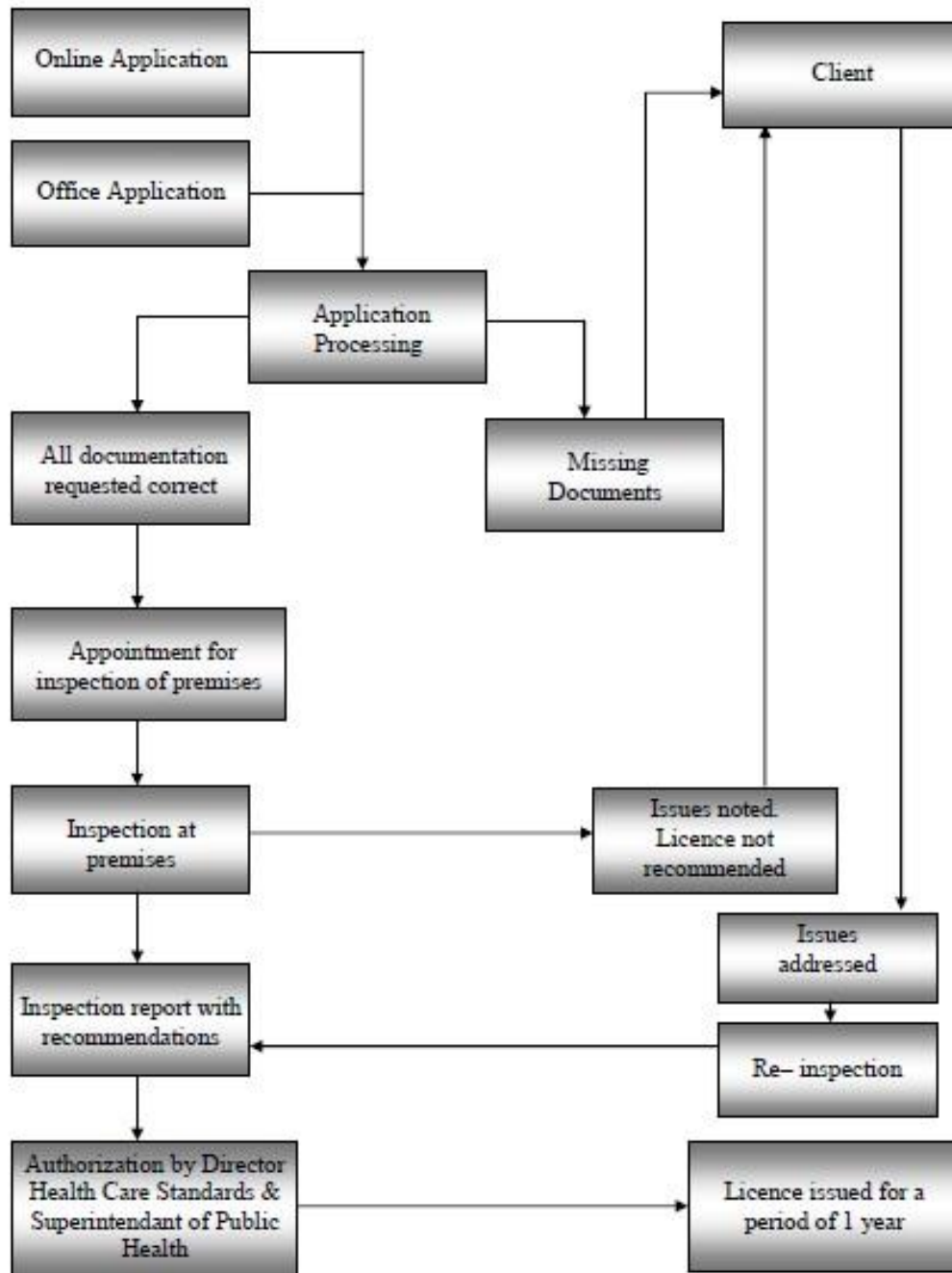
## 6. Applying for a Licence

- a. A person interested in practicing tattooing must apply for a licence as stipulated by the Control of Tattooing Act;
- b. New applicants must be at least eighteen (18) years of age;
- c. One can apply for a licence either by completing the [application form](#) or through the online application found at <https://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/hcs/Pages/temp/Application-for-a-licence.aspx>
- d. Documents required when applying for a tattooing licence include the following:
  - o A completed application form;
  - o A certificate of competence with regards to tattooing with special emphasis to knowledge on safe infection control practices and which is in line with the requirements issued by the Health Care Standards Directorate which can be downloaded from <https://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/hcs/Pages/downloads.aspx>
  - o A PA permit showing the proposed premises including the site plan or a declaration by an architect certifying that the premises carries a PA permit and that the premises can be used to provide tattooing services;
  - o A Hepatitis B Vaccination Record and an Anti Hbs titre result;
  - o A photocopy of the applicant's identity card;
  - o If applying on behalf of a company, a copy of the Memorandum of Articles together with a declaration by the Director/s of the same company indicating that licence is to be issued on the applicant;
  - o If the applicant is not an EU citizen, a permit is required. Kindly note that in order for a **third country national** to practice as a tattooist on a temporary one has to apply through the Employment Licences at Jobs plus. One can contact Jobs plus through telephone no 22201290 or email [jobsplus@gov.mt](mailto:jobsplus@gov.mt). In order for one to practice as a tattooist on a permanent basis in Malta one has to contact Identity Malta through telephone no 25904000/25904800.
- e. Upon receiving the completed application together with all the relevant documents, the

licensing officer will vet the application accordingly;

- f. At this stage an onsite inspection is organised and the client is informed. An inspection team holding an authorisation badge will visit the premises;
- g. In case of a new establishment, a pre licensing visit may be requested by the applicant (recommended);
- h. A [self-assessment](#) indicating the requirements to operate a tattoo studio will be sent to the applicant ten days prior to the inspection. This self-assessment will guide the applicant on what the inspection team will be expecting to find during the planned visit;
- i. Following an inspection, the inspection team will verify that all conditions for licencing are satisfied and will be in a position to recommend the issuance of a licence;
- j. In cases where deficiencies/shortcomings are identified, a meeting with the applicant to advice and highlight the deficiencies needing attention will be held, this may necessitate a follow up visit;
- k. Once all conditions for licensing are satisfactory a Tattooing licence reflecting both the tattoo artist and the tattoo studio will be issued;
- l. The licence includes a [set of conditions](#).The person applying for a licence to carry out tattooing must understand and comply with these conditions;
- m. Once the application is approved and licensing is recommended, the client is advised to pay an annual licence fee of €12.90. The licence can be collected from the Health Care Standards Directorate, St Luke's Hospital OPD level 1, St Luke's Square, G'Mangia or the applicant can opt to receive it by registered mail.

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## 7. Additional guidelines

- a. **Record keeping:** records of each client must be kept in a secure place and made available during an inspection. Information in these records must include: the name, age, ID number, address of client and date of the tattooing procedure. Additionally, the site tattooed and notes taken regarding any old tattoos must also be recorded. These records must be signed and kept in total confidentiality for a period of at least 10 years; [standard record sheet templates](#) are provided by the Health Care Standards Directorate and can be downloaded from <https://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/hcs/Pages/downloads.aspx>;
- b. Tattooing inks are to be purchased from reputable suppliers and each bottle must be adequately labeled. Unbranded inks are **not** to be used. All ink bottles must have a clear expiry date. The same applies to tubes and needles;
- c. Any leftover inks, creams or any other solutions, which have been used on a client, must **not** be returned to the original container and must not **be used** on another client. Any applicator used for the dispensing of ink, creams or any other solutions, **must not** be re-dipped into the original container and must be disposed of immediately after use;
- d. Date when an ink bottle is opened must be recorded;
- e. A fully equipped first aid box must be available within the working station;
- f. All practicing tattoo artists must know contact with blood and body fluids precautions;
- g. The client must be advised that any anesthetic cream containing medicinals such as adrenaline and lignocaine must be purchased from a pharmacy before a tattooing procedure.

## 8. The Tattooist

- a. A licenced tattooist must attend for all seminars delivered by the Health Care Standards Directorate;
- b. The tattooist must be free from infectious diseases;
- c. While practicing, a tattooist cannot be under the influence of any alcohol and/or drugs;
- d. Additionally, tattooing cannot be performed on clients who are seen to be under the influence of alcohol and /or drugs thus unable to sign an informed consent;
- e. New disposable latex gloves must be worn during the whole procedure and must be changed with each client, gloves must be disposed of in an appropriate manner after use. Nitrile gloves should also be available to be used for clients who are allergic to latex. Gloves must **never** be washed and re-used;
- f. Tattooing cannot be performed on clients who are under 18 years of age. Moreover, it is illegal for a person under the age of eighteen (18) to request a tattooing procedure or to enter a tattoo studio;
- g. Tattooing on the face, palms and back of hands is not allowed as laid down in the [conditions of licence](#);
- h. The tattooist must sign a declaration that he/she has read and understood the [conditions of the licence](#).

## 9. Aftercare

- a. Once the tattooing procedure is complete, the skin of the client is to be treated with a suitable disinfectant and completely covered with a sterile dressing;
- b. Each client must be given written aftercare information. This information should include: tattooing aftercare; infection prevention and identification; general care instructions; information regarding the healing process; advice when to consult a doctor, signs and



symptoms of an allergic reaction or any other delayed healing. [Aftercare sheet templates](#) can be also be downloaded from <https://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/hcs/Pages/downloads.aspx>. A client has to sign on the [client records sheet](#), once the tattoo aftercare advice was provided and explained.