

COVID-19 Transitioning – Standards for Tattoo Artists/Studios

Employers and workers must work together to adapt and promote safe work practices consistent with advice from public health authorities and to ensure that premises are ready for the social distancing and correct hygiene measures that are critical to prevent and control the transmission of COVID 19

Employers and workers must prepare for the possibility that there will be cases of COVID-19 in the workplace and be ready to respond immediately, appropriately, effectively and efficiently, and consistent with specific recommendations from public health authorities.

Mandatory conditions to be observed by Tattoo Studios

- Ensure that maximum capacity inside the studio at any one time is one person per 4 square meters, including staff.
- Acrylic or tempered glass barriers should be fitted in reception areas (2 meters from the floor).
- Workstations/ chairs must be kept at a minimum distance of 2 meters from each other or separated by an acrylic or tempered glass barrier which is 2 meters high. These barriers must be cleaned and disinfected properly after every client (see section studio environment).
- Hand sanitizers must be made available at the reception area and near all workstations for employee and client use (sanitizers with sensors are recommended).
- Clients (and suppliers) must wear a mask (covering mouth, nose and chin) or visor at all times unless instructed otherwise by the service provider due to the process being undertaken.
- Staff should wear a surgical or cloth mask or visor when providing a service to a client
- All equipment and surfaces used should be disinfected after every client.
- Records of clients appointments including contact numbers should be kept for at least 4 weeks
- Obligations relating to Chapter 270 of the Laws of Malta 'Control of Tattooing Act' remain applicable

Understanding how COVID-19 spreads & the implication to tattooing and piercing Industry.

Current research suggests that the SARSCoV-2 virus (the virus that causes COVID-19) is transmitted from person to person:

- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks loudly.
- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 2 meters).

There is also a possibility that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the COVID-19 virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, and eyes.

Most persons infected with COVID-19 experience mild symptoms and recover. However, some people develop more serious complications and may require hospital care. Risk of serious illness increases with age, for people with weakened immune systems and people with conditions such as diabetes, heart and lung disease.

Studio administration

Studio owners /Management should

- Exercise the right of refusal of entry into the studio of clients if they are visibly unwell or have respiratory symptoms including coughing, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose or sore throat.
- Ensure that maximum capacity of persons inside the studio at any one time is one person per 4 square meters, including staff. To achieve this 4 square meter 'rule':
 - calculate the area of the studio (e.g. length of studio in meters x width of studio in meters = area of studio in square meters),
 - divide the area of the studio by 4, and
 - the answer of that division (ignoring any remainder) is the maximum capacity that the studio can hold at any one time.
 - By way of example, if a studio is 25 square meters in size, $25 \div 4 = 6.25$, ignoring 0.25, the studio should allow only six (6) persons at any time inside the studio, including staff.
- Allow only one (1) client and one (1) member of staff at any one time inside a studio with a total area less than 8 square meters.
- Ensure that clients are kept at the same workstation as much as possible.
- Encourage clients to book an appointment online or by phone; when setting appointments advise clients not to attend for their appointment if they have any potential COVID-19 symptoms or are in mandatory quarantine.
- appointments should be staggered to avoid clients coming into contact with each other; walk-ins should not be allowed - a sign to this effect should be put up outside the studio.
- Records of client appointments including contact numbers should be kept for at least 4 weeks to facilitate contact tracing should this be required.
- Allow enough time for cleaning the workstation / environment between clients. Clients should not be allowed in the studio before the service of the previous client is completed and the studio is sanitized
- Ensure that the studio is thoroughly cleaned with a disinfectant between clients. This includes workstations, chairs, trolleys, wash hand basins and equipment. Door handles and any other surfaces or high-touch objects should be cleaned regularly.

- Ensure that any sets of tools and/or equipment used during the service of a client is washed and sterilised after each client.
- Do Not allow clients to wait inside the studio and advise them to arrive just before their appointment and leave immediately thereafter.
- Ensure that clients attend for the appointment on their own. Children should not accompany clients.
 - Schedule courier and deliveries outside client times.
 - Place floor stickers and signage that provide guidance for social distancing.
 - Remove non- essential items such as magazines.
 - Not provide beverages and refreshments for clients. Clients should be advised to bring their own refreshment preferably water.
 - Encourage contactless payment as much as possible.
 - Ensure that employees who are sick STAY at home.
 - Provide training and educational material for staff on sanitation, handwashing, cough and sneeze etiquette, use of face masks, visors, gloves and aprons, and other protective behaviour to prevent the spread of COVID19
 - Ensure staff rooms are thoroughly cleaned and sanitized and not allow staff to congregate.
 - Ensure that all wash hand basins in the workplace have antibacterial soap and paper towels available. No air flow driers or revolving cloth towels are allowed.
 - Place handwashing signs in the restrooms.
 - Provide alcohol wipes near the phone and payment stations.
 - Consider flexible work schedules/hours to reduce the number of people (employees and clients) in studio at all times in order to maintain social distancing.
 - Preferably not perform procedures that involve the removal of the client's mask, such as facial piercings; if client's mask is removed, the procedure should be kept as brief as possible and all other preventive measures followed

Communication with clients

- Clients should be contacted before their appointment asking whether they have had any respiratory symptoms for the last 7 days or if they are in mandatory quarantine.
- Telephone or virtual consultations should be conducted prior to appointment where possible in order to limit contact time in the studio.
- Ensure that clients are aware of what is expected of them as part of the hygiene and infection control measures being practiced at the shop/studio BEFORE entering the studio. These can be communicated to clients over the phone, via email or other appropriate virtual channels.
- Information about services, prices, aftercare and follow up appointments should be given electronically, over the phone or through virtual consultations to avoid handing out leaflets/papers/appointment cards etc.

Maintaining good hygiene practices

Staff should

- Avoid touching their eyes nose and mouth.
- Wash hands frequently especially:
 - Before, during (if required), and after each treatment/service to a client
 - Before putting on and after removing face masks, visors, gloves and aprons
 - Before and after cleaning tools, equipment and the environment in the studio

- Before and after eating
- Before and after coffee breaks
- After using the rest room
- Upon arriving at work and at home

Washing hands with soap should be given priority over using alcohol hand rub. The application of alcohol hand rub should not be done in place of hand washing but rather as a complementary step AFTER handwashing or if hand washing is not convenient. Alcohol hand rub should contain a minimum of 70% alcohol.

- Use disposable hand towels to dry hands and to open and turn off taps.
- Not use handshakes/hugs when greeting clients and colleagues.
- Monitor their personal health and condition for any symptoms, however mild.
- Wear uniforms at work which should be changed daily and washed after use. Uniforms/clothing worn at the studio should not be worn at home.
- Keep nails short and do not apply acrylics.
- Keep hair tied back to avoid unnecessary touching of hair and face.
- Practice good respiratory etiquette requiring everyone at the studio to, at all times:
 - cover their coughs and sneezes with a clean tissue or use their elbow (and no spitting)
 - avoid touching their face, eyes, nose and mouth
 - dispose of used tissues and cigarette butts hygienically, e.g. in closed bins
 - wash their hands before and after smoking a cigarette
 - clean and disinfect shared equipment and machinery after use
 - wash body, hair (including facial hair) and clothes thoroughly every day
 - have no intentional physical contact such as shaking hands and patting backs
- Staff who develop a mild cough, fever (i.e. a temperature of 37.2⁰C or higher), shortness of breath, headaches, tiredness, sore throat, runny/blocked nose, loss of taste, loss of smell, vomiting or diarrhoea, should call the public health helpline on 111 giving details of their symptoms.

Use of Personal Protective Equipment by staff

- Staff should wear a surgical or cloth mask or visor when providing a service to a client.
- The face mask should completely cover the face from the bridge of the nose down to the chin. Clean hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitiser before putting on and taking off the face mask. When taking off the face mask, remove it from behind, avoiding touching the front side. Dispose of the face mask safely by placing it in a plastic bag and put it in the trash if it is disposable. Wash your hands or apply 70% alcohol hand-rub immediately after removing the face mask. Washable, reusable face should be washed as soon as possible after each use, using common detergent at 60 °C.
- Surgical masks are not intended to be used more than once. If your mask is damaged or soiled, or if breathing through the mask becomes difficult, you should remove the face mask, discard it safely, and replace it with a new one.
- Visors should ideally be the reusable type and are disinfected appropriately in between clients.
- Gloves should be worn only to provide treatments/services that necessitated the use of gloves even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic for hygiene purposes or to prevent

transmission of other infectious agents such as HIV and Hepatitis. Gloves should be changed and disposed of safely after every client.

- A disposable apron/gown should be worn and changed after every client.

Used PPE should be disposed of safely in the mixed waste stream (black bag), in double bags.



Wash your hands
with soap and water or
sanitizer before touching
the mask



Inspect the mask
for tears or holes



Find the top side
where the metal piece
or stiff edge is



Hold the mask from the
elastic loops and place it
on your face. Ensure the
coloured-side faces
outwards



Avoid touching the
front side of the mask
while putting it on
your face



Place the metal piece
or stiff edge over
your nose



Cover your mouth,
nose and chin. Do not
leave gaps on the side



Remove the mask from
behind the ears or from
the elastic loops



Keep the used mask
away from you and
surfaces once it is
removed



Dispose of the mask
immediately after use
in a safe way



Wash your hands
either with soap and
water or sanitizer after
discarding the mask

Clients (and suppliers)

- Should have their temperature checked using a contactless forehead thermometer before entering the studio.
- Should apply alcohol hand rub upon entering the studio. An appropriate 70% alcohol hand-rub should be provided at the entrance of the studio.
- Must wear a mask (covering mouth and nose and chin) at all times unless instructed otherwise by the service provider due to the treatment process.
- Should limit the personal belongings they bring with them ideally to just a mobile phone and mode of payment.

The Studio Environment

- Doors and windows must be kept open, air-conditioning adjusted for more ventilation and recirculated air-conditioning avoided.

- Airconditioning flaps should be directed towards the ceiling. Filters should be cleaned well and maintained properly. Detailed guidance on Air-conditioning and ventilation systems issued by the Public Health Authorities should be consulted¹.
- Extractors are recommended in every studio. These must be thoroughly cleaned every week
- All precautions must be taken to ensure water systems are safe to prevent the risk of infections derived from water such as Legionnaire's disease. If the water supply is connected to the main water supply, flushing of the water system by opening all taps for a few minutes should suffice. However, if the supply of water is through a roof tank, this should be cleaned, and the water system is flushed through for a few minutes. It is important that the water heater temperature is raised to 60°C and thus there is no need to take samples and get approval from the Environmental Health Directorate. If the studio forms part of a complex or a hotel and the water supply is through the complex or hotel main water system, please follow the procedure indicated in Annex 1.
- Baskets/bins used to hold soiled linens must be cleaned and disinfected daily. Use a basket/bin that can be kept closed or used with liners which can be removed and discarded.
- Use disposable single use tools and supplies as much as possible to help reduce the risk of cross contamination.
- All tools that can be cleaned and reused must be sterilized / disinfected (strictly following manufacturer's instructions) using products that are tested to approved standards.
- Clean tools should be kept in a clean environment and properly covered until use.
- All used tools need to be stored in a specially marked closed container until cleansing and disinfection
- All equipment utilized during a treatment/service should be cleaned and disinfected after each use. This should be done in line with manufacturer's guidelines and one should consult with the providers of the equipment to verify what proper cleaning and disinfecting methods should be used.
- Do not forget to also clean the cords of electrical appliances.
- Ensure that all products such as dyes, etc. are stored in a closed container and if not, these should be discarded and replaced

Cleaning studio surfaces is crucial to prevent and reduce the spread of viruses and other germs.

- Wear disposable gloves while cleaning and disinfecting the environment.
- Wipe down all surfaces (floors, worktops, trolleys, couches, chairs, sinks/basins etc) with medical grade disinfectant & cleaner following guidelines and let them air dry.
- Contact time on label must be observed for disinfectant to work. Contact time refers to how long the disinfectant is visibly wet on the surface allowing it to thoroughly destroy all the pathogens. Typical contact time for immersion/sprays is 10 minutes, for disinfectant wipes is 2-4 minutes.
- Remember to clean all touch points with medical grade disinfectant & cleaner frequently during the day. These include door push plates/handles, light switches, fridge handles, touch points on any shelving, soap dispenser, toilet flush and taps, card machine. Cleaning of the workstation should be repeated after every client.

¹ https://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/health-promotion/covid-19/Documents/mitigation-conditions-and-guidances/Guidance_Air-conditioning-and-ventilation-systems_23Jun20.pdf

- Items on hard surfaces should be kept to a minimum.
- Where possible avoid using any materials or furniture in the studio that are difficult to clean such as carpets, material couches, etc.

How to stay informed: www.covid19health.gov.mt