

# SR12

## COSHH essentials for service and retail

# Electrolysis, piercing, tattooing and micro-pigmentation

## General ventilation



This information will help employers (including the self-employed and franchisees) comply with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH), as amended, to control exposure and protect workers' health.

It is also useful for trade union safety representatives.

This sheet describes good practice.

It covers the points you need to follow to reduce exposure to an adequate level.

It is important to follow all the points, or use equally effective measures.

Some chemicals can be flammable, so your controls must suit those hazards too. Look at the safety data sheet for more information.

Disinfectants are biocidal products. Authorised products are safe for use so long as you follow the instructions on the label.

### Main points

- Solvent-based products may produce harmful vapours.
- Avoid contact with blood and tissue residues. These can be infected.
- Check that all controls are being used properly.
- Consider substituting with safer products.

### Access and premises

- ✓ Provide good washing facilities.
- Caution: never eat or drink in the work area.

### Equipment

- ✓ Keep the workplace well ventilated, with a through draught.
- ✓ Use sterile single-use instruments wherever possible.
- ✓ Sterilise all reusable equipment that can be contaminated with blood, etc. This includes semi-permanent tattooing equipment. Ultraviolet (UV) light boxes and glass bead sterilisers are not good enough.
- ✓ Either negotiate access to a steriliser in your local hospital or clinic, or use a steam steriliser.
- ✓ Work surfaces (eg floors, tables, couches) must be smooth and impervious to aid cleaning.
- ✓ Blood contamination means that swabs, gloves etc are clinical waste. Put these in a clinical waste container. You need a licensed waste contractor.



Caution: Never decant product into an unlabelled container. Never re-use a container. Dispose of it safely or return it to your supplier.

### Personal protective equipment (PPE)

- ✓ Follow the instructions on product labels.
- ✓ Ask your supplier to help you get the right PPE.
- ✓ Provide protective gloves - single-use gloves are acceptable. If you must use latex gloves, use only 'low-protein, powder-free' gloves.
- ✓ Throw away single-use gloves every time they are taken off, and wash hands.
- ✓ Provide a disposable plastic apron and splash-proof eye protection.
- ✓ Cover all cuts and any broken skin.
- ✓ Skin creams are important for skin condition. They help in washing contamination from the skin. After-work creams help to replace skin oils.

Caution: 'barrier creams' do not make a full barrier.

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## Procedures

- ✓ Check that containers are easy to pour from, don't dribble, and don't trap liquid in a rim.
- ✓ If possible, buy products in a ready-for-use solution.
- ✓ Can you get solid chemicals in tablet form, or in a wide-necked container such that it is easy to scoop out granules?
- ✓ Store products securely in a cool, dry, dark place, capable of keeping in spills. Don't store far more than you need.
- ✓ Read the instructions on the label carefully - follow the instructions for use.
- ✓ Keep products off your skin - wash off any splashes immediately.
- ✓ Make up only as much solution as you will need for immediate use.
- ✓ Put the cap back on the container immediately.
- ✓ Write down your procedures for dealing with clinical waste.

## Special care

- ✓ Contact with many products can lead to dermatitis. Some can also damage the eyes.
- ✓ Check that tattoo and micro-pigmentation inks are sterile - see the data sheet.
- ✓ Try to avoid chloroethane (ethyl chloride) as a skin anaesthetic. This chemical may cause cancer.
- ✓ Never add any other chemical to concentrates that contain bleach (sodium hypochlorite solution). This can cause a dangerous gas (chlorine) to be given off.

## Maintenance, examination and testing

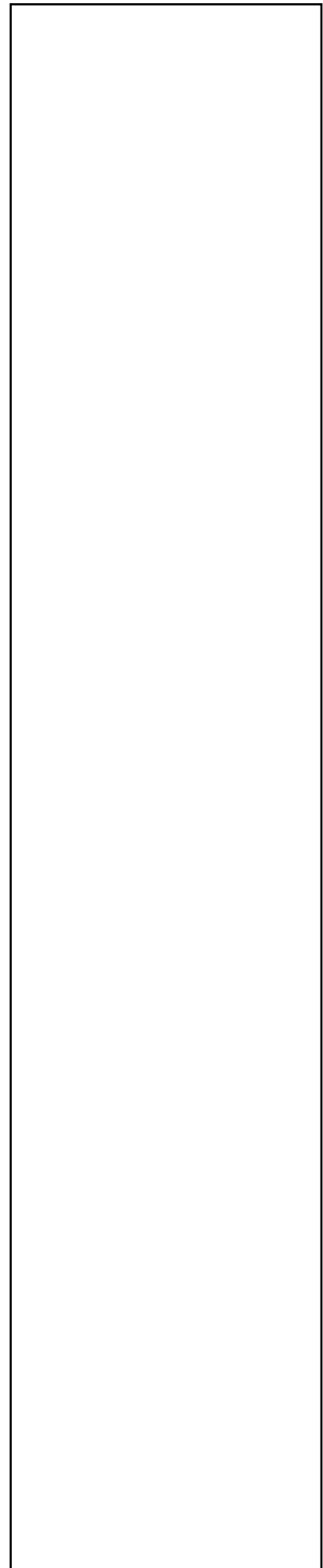
- ✓ Follow instructions in maintenance manuals - keep equipment in effective and efficient working order.
- ✓ Steam sterilisers require regular examinations and tests. Seek advice from your insurance provider.
- ✓ Keep records of these tests.

## Health monitoring

- ✓ Have workers had their Hepatitis B jabs?
- ✓ Ask your workers to check their skin for dryness or soreness every month. If these effects appear, check the proper use of skin creams and PPE.
- ✓ Check if any information about the product says 'may cause sensitisation' or 'can cause allergic reactions'. If so, seek advice from the product representative, or a consultant - see Further information.

## Cleaning and housekeeping

- ✓ Keep the work area clean.
- ✓ Wash out mixing equipment after use. Dispose of this waste liquid safely.
- ✓ Write down your sterilisation procedures and make sure these are followed.
- ✓ Sterilise reusable equipment as soon as possible after use.
- ✓ Clean out ultrasonicators at the end of every day.
- ✓ Disinfect shower heads once a week.
- ✓ Clean up spills promptly - practise how to do this.



- ✓ Dispose of empty containers and clinical wastes safely.  
**Caution: Workers must not take work clothing home for washing. Use a contract laundry.**

### Training and supervision

- ✓ Tell workers about the risks - see product labels or Section 15 of the safety data sheet.
- ✓ Warn workers about blood-borne diseases, eg Hepatitis.
- ✓ Working in the right way and using the controls correctly is important for exposure control. Train and supervise workers. See sheet SR0.

### Further information

- *Preventing dermatitis at work: Advice for employers and employees* Leaflet INDG233 HSE Books 1996 (single copy free or priced packs of 15 ISBN 0 7176 1246 5)
- Posters on protective gloves and skin care - see [www.hse.gov.uk/skin/information.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/skin/information.htm)
- Micro-pigmentation, semi-permanent tattooing and semi-permanent make-up Local Authority Circular LAC 14/1 Health and Safety Executive/Local Authority Enforcement Liaison Committee (HELA) 2005 Web version available at [hse.gov.uk/lau/lacs/index.htm](http://hse.gov.uk/lau/lacs/index.htm)
- *Health and safety issues related to body piercing, tattooing and scarification* Local Authority Circular LAC 76/2 Health and Safety Executive/Local Authority Enforcement Liaison Committee (HELA) 2005 Web version available at [hse.gov.uk/lau/lacs/index.htm](http://hse.gov.uk/lau/lacs/index.htm)
- *Infection at work: controlling the risks* - see [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/infection.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/infection.pdf)

### Useful links

- HSE priced and free publications are available from HSE Books Tel: 01787 881165 Website: [www.hsebooks.co.uk](http://www.hsebooks.co.uk).
- For information about health and safety ring HSE's Infoline Tel: 0845 345 0055 Textphone: 0845 408 9577 e-mail: [hse.infoline@natbrit.com](mailto:hse.infoline@natbrit.com).
- Contact the British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS) on 01332 298101 or at [www.bohs.org](http://www.bohs.org) for lists of qualified hygienists who can help you.
- Look in the Yellow Pages under 'Health and safety consultants' and 'Health authorities and services' for 'occupational health'.
- Also see [www.nhsplus.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsplus.nhs.uk).

## Employee checklist

- Look for signs of leaks, wear and damage.
- If you find any problems, tell your supervisor. Don't just carry on working.
- Clear up blood spills immediately. Mop up with swabs or tissues, put these in the clinical waste bin, then disinfect the surface.
- Throw away single-use gloves every time you take them off. Then wash your hands.
- Never clean your hands with concentrated cleaning products or solvents.
- Check your skin regularly for dryness or soreness - tell your supervisor if these symptoms appear.

This guidance is issued by the Health and Safety Executive. Following the guidance is not compulsory and you are free to take other action. But if you do follow the guidance you will normally be doing enough to comply with the law. Health and safety inspectors seek to secure compliance with the law and may refer to this guidance as illustrating good practice.