

**AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**SKIN PENETRATION PROCEDURES ACT 1994**

**APPROVAL OF CODE OF PRACTICE " THE SKIN PENETRATION  
PROCEDURES CODE"**

**NO. 94 OF 1995**

**EXPLANATORY STATEMENT**

**INTRODUCTION**

The *Skin Penetration Procedures Act 1994* is aimed at reducing the risk of infection from blood borne disease through the licensing of commercial and home business premises used for the purposes of skin penetration procedures and also, the practices of persons who perform such procedures in the ACT

A skin penetration procedure is defined in the Act as any process that involves piercing, cutting, puncturing or tearing of the skin or any part of the human body, or the administration of a dye or other substance for the purpose of colouring part of the skin of the human body. It also includes a process that is performed as part of therapeutic treatment as well as the cleaning, disinfecting or sterilisation of equipment used in these procedures. Closed ear piercing or the process of cutting, shaving or dyeing a person's hair are not included in the definition.

Part 111 of the Act provides powers to require persons who perform skin penetration procedures, for example all health care workers and also acupuncturists, beauty therapists and tattooists to meet minimum operating standards which would be set out in a legally enforceable Code of Practice.

**OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the Skin Penetration Code of Practice are to:

- (a) provide a written record of standards adopted by reference into the *Skin Penetration Procedures Act 1994*,
- (b) minimise the risk of transmission of blood borne infections by the adoption of universal precautions during skin penetration procedures,
- (c) ensure appliances are clean and sterile before being introduced into normally sterile human tissue,
- (d) establish guidelines to minimise the risk of transmission of microorganisms between the operator, the appliances used, and other clients,

- (e) promote a safe work environment for workers performing skin penetration procedures

## **SCOPE**

This Code applies to

- all persons who perform skin penetration procedures for fee, reward or public service;
- the premises in which skin penetration procedures are performed,
- the business of cleaning and/or sterilising appliances for the purpose of skin penetration.

## **PROVISIONS**

The Code of Practice is divided into four parts:

- Part I Introduction
- Part II Standards for infection control
- Part III Administration
- Part IV Appendices

Part I contains the aims and objectives of the Code of Practice as well as a definitions section

Part II contains the specific infection control requirements which need to be adhered to such cleaning and sterilisation procedures. This section sets general minimum standards only and does not specify how particular specialised equipment should be cleaned and sterilised as these directions are supplied by the manufacturer

Part III contains the administrative sections of the Code such as a review and evaluation mechanism and a disclaimer of liability

Part IV contains two appendices

Appendix I has general construction requirements for premises because it is not possible to specify the design requirements for every type of premises in one document. Any specific requirements will be determined on a project by project basis in close consultation between the practitioner and Departmental officers

Appendix II contains specific requirements for procedures such as tattooing, beauty therapy and body piercing. Specific requirements for medical and dental procedures are not covered by this Code of Practice because they are covered in other documents such as hospital procedures manuals

## **MONITORING OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE**

The Code will be monitored by authorised officers from the Public Health Division of the ACT Department of Health and Community Care. The monitoring program will include the establishment and operation of the Code and the development of performance measurements to assess compliance with the Code. The program will also involve auditing of practitioners premises as well as their infection control procedures. Education of the public and practitioners is seen as one of the most effective means of ensuring unsafe practices are eliminated.

## **REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF THE CODE**

The effectiveness of the Code will be reviewed after the first six months of its operation, and then at intervals of not more than three years.

If necessary, amendments to the Code will be made following consultation with industry and health professional groups and other relevant organisations such as the NHMRC and Standards Australia.

## **PUBLICITY**

The Skin Penetration Procedures Act requires that a notice of determination be placed in the Gazette and in a local newspaper giving details of a code, the date on which it takes effect, places where copies may be purchased, and a place where it is available for inspection by the public.

The Act also requires that each licensee or deemed licensee is given a copy of the Code of Practice.

A letter will be sent to each shop fitter, architect and builder known to be working in the ACT and Queanbeyan as well as the relevant professional organisations providing them with that information.

The code will be available for inspection and for purchase at each ACT Government shop front and at the offices of the Public and Environmental Health Service at Scullin.