

THE GERMAN, DUTCH AND BRITISH TATTOO HYGIENE GUIDELINES IN VIEW OF THE COMING EU/CEN STANDARD

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Hygiene is inextricably linked to safe tattooing practice. The act of tattooing includes breaking the skin barrier, but is performed by professionals who are not medically trained. Infection control in tattoo practice continues to prove its importance as tattoo-related outbreaks of infectious diseases continue to be reported in Europe. Different guidelines for safe practice apply in different European countries. These guidelines are created by governmental and health organisations or by tattoo artists organisations.

Tattoo artists often operate across borders. Having to adopt to different instructions in different national guidelines however does not contribute to compliance. It is therefore desirable to have one uniform European guideline for safe tattooing practice.

In 2014, the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) established a European committee for tattooing services following an initiative of the German tattooist organisation Deutsche organisierte Tätowierer (D.O.T). The scope of the committee is standardization of requirements and recommendations for the provision of tattooing services. This includes requirements on information to customers, i.e. informed consent, hygienic performance of tattooing, including knowledge and skills, infection control, vaccination, suitable facilities as well as requirements for cleaning, disinfection and sterilization, management of waste, necessary documentation and aftercare information. The process must lead to a European guideline that is understandable, practical and safe.

The committee has decided that the German, Dutch and British guidelines will be merged into one guideline that will serve as foundation for the European guideline. The content of these guidelines is similar but differs in the amount of detail and verifiability and in specific instructions. In 2015 consensus will be reached.