



Guilford County Department of Health & Human Services
Division of Environmental Health
1203 Maple St., 3rd Floor
Greensboro, NC 27405
(336) 641-3771

Tattoo Artist Permitting and Operation

The practice of tattooing is regulated in North Carolina under 15A NCAC 18A .3200 “*Rules Governing Tattooing*”. The Guilford County Department of Health & Human Services, Environmental Health Division locally enforces these rules. Tattooing is defined under North Carolina General Statute § 130A-283 as “*the inserting of permanent markings or coloration, or the production of scars, upon or under human skin through puncturing by use of a needle or any other method*”.

PERMITTING

Persons who intend to practice as a tattoo or permanent make-up artist in Guilford County should first contact Environmental Health so staff can review the minimum requirements with prospective artists. If the person then determines that they wish to continue the application process, they must complete the permit application form provided and submit, along with the specified permit fee, to this office at least **30 days before** their anticipated date to begin tattooing. **No tattooing can take place without a valid permit.** The annual fee is **\$500** for the initial permit and for a renewal for the artist. Please note, once the application and payment are received and filed, refunds may not be allowed. For new artists, if you have concerns regarding potential site or location for a tattooing establishment, you may contact this Department for an onsite review of the proposed location. There is no fee for this review and it may help prevent delays in obtaining a permit and the added expense of equipment replacement that does not meet the State requirements.

BASIC OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

The North Carolina tattoo rules require tattoo and permanent make-up artists to meet the minimum sanitation standards. These include, but are not limited to:

- Approved water supply and sewage disposal
- Providing a clean facility/studio with floors, walls, ceilings, fixtures, and furniture in good repair. Floors and furniture must be non-absorbent and easily cleanable in tattooing area
- A separate sink for handwashing. At least 1 handsink for 5 artists
- Maintenance of records of clients (client’s name, address, phone number, signature, and **date of birth**) & autoclave tests

Each artist must be able to demonstrate knowledge of proper aseptic technique to the Environmental Health Specialist during the inspection. A copy of the rules may be found at <https://ehs.ncpublichealth.com/docs/rules/294306-13-3200.pdf>.

Once a PASSING inspection is completed by this Department, the tattoo or permanent make-up artist will receive an operating permit. Tattooing permits are issued to a specific individual at a specific location and are valid for one year. If an artist practices at more than one location, they must obtain a permit for **each location**.

BODY PIERCING

North Carolina has no **public health** laws or regulation regarding body piercing. N.C. General Statute § 14-400(b) specifies age requirements for obtaining a piercing that is enforced under local law enforcement agencies. However, Guilford County does have a County Ordinance regulating body piercing. They may be found at <https://www.guilfordcountync.gov/home/showdocument?id=464>. Additional resources related to tattooing and body piercing may be found at <https://www.guilfordcountync.gov/our-county/human-services/health-department/environmental-health/tattoo-piercing-information>.

For additional information contact:

(336) 641-3771