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Tattoo and Body Piercing Shops and Ohio EPA's Regulations for Handling Infectious Waste "Sharps"

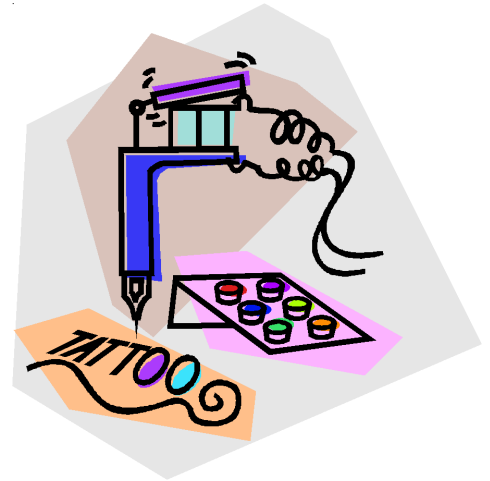
If you are operating or planning to open a tattoo or piercing shop, you need to be aware of the regulations that apply to you. Tattoo and piercing shops are primarily regulated under Ohio Department of Health (ODH) regulations. You are required to submit plans for your business and an application form (available from your local health department), pay a fee and get your operation approved by your local health department. Local health departments also inspect shops. To help protect public health, you are also subject to strict requirements related to hand washing, needle handling, record-keeping, age limitations and sterilization procedures.

Tattoo/piercing shops also are regulated because they generate waste "sharps," including disposable needles, syringes, scalpels and razors, which fall under Ohio EPA's definition of infectious waste. If your business generates less than 50 pounds of infectious waste per calendar month, you are classified as a small generator. Some of the basic Ohio EPA requirements for small generators include:

Containers and Disposal

Small generators need to put discarded needles, syringes, scalpel blades and other sharps in a *sharps container*. The container must be in good condition, puncture and leak resistant with a tight fitting cover. It also needs to be rigid and strong enough to withstand handling during transport (for example, it won't collapse or break open).

You must label your container with the word "sharps" and the international biohazard symbol. Once you fill your sharps container, you can put the container in the dumpster along with your other solid waste for pickup by your solid waste hauler.



Keeping Records

Under Ohio EPA's rules, small generators need to keep a written log which shows the amount (weight) of infectious waste generated each month. You aren't required to send this information to Ohio EPA, but do need to keep it on file at your business.

If you generate more than fifty pounds of infectious waste in a month, you must register with Ohio EPA as a large infectious waste generator. Large generators cannot put untreated infectious waste in their dumpster. They must ensure that the waste is properly treated either on-site, or shipped off-site to a licensed infectious waste treatment facility.



Examples of biohazard labels.

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Once rendered non-infectious through treatment, wastes can be disposed of at a licensed solid waste disposal facility. Additional requirements for large generators include using a registered transporter, completing shipping papers, developing spill containment/clean up procedures and recording spills in a log.

If you have questions about Ohio EPA's requirements, contact our Division of Solid and Infectious Waste Management at (614) 644-2621 and ask to speak with an infectious waste specialist.

For More Information

Ohio EPA's "Guidance Document for Small Generators of Infectious Waste."
www.epa.state.oh.us/dsiwm/document/guidance/gd_075.pdf

Ohio EPA's "Questions and Answers for Small Generators of Infectious Waste."
www.epa.state.oh.us/dsiwm/document/guidance/gd_076.pdf

Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Web Site
Tattoo/Body Piercing Establishment Regulations
www.odh.ohio.gov/rules/final/f3701-9.aspx

List of local health departments
www.odh.ohio.gov/localHealthDistricts/localHealthDistricts.aspx