



# SUTTER COUNTY

## DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Building Inspection  
Code Enforcement

Engineering/Water Resources  
Environmental Health

Planning  
Road Maintenance

## STERILE WATER USE IN TATTOOING

The use of non-sterile water in tattooing activities has been associated with a number of water-borne skin infections caused by bacteria such as Legionella, Pseudomonas and Mycobacteria. These infections can result in severe illness and when left untreated, they may be fatal. Even mild infections can commonly result in skin scarring and damage to the tattoo.

Water that is not sterile, including tap, bottled, “spring”, reverse osmosis filtered, and distilled water, may not be safe to cleanse the skin, rinse needles and to dilute inks that are injected into the skin. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend the use of sterile water when tattooing. Another safe option is the use of sterile saline solution.

While there are no current regulations that require this practice, artists concerned with the health and safety of their customers have incorporated the use of sterile water or sterile saline for ink dilution, rinsing of needles, and rinsing of skin during their tattoo procedures.

***The use of sterile water or sterile saline solution can help protect your customers from water-borne skin infections that can hurt their health and damage the body art you created for them.***



Here are several ways to obtain sterile water or sterile saline:

- Online retailer
- Retail store (sterile saline)
- Ultraviolet device (UV) \*
- Filtration \*
- In-shop, using your autoclave to process single-use volumes of water



\* Must be certified according to US EPA Microbiological Water Purifier Standard.