

Sterilization Procedures

When a body art facility is equipped with a decontamination and sterilization room and will be sterilizing reusable instruments and body art jewelry, the following sterilization procedures must be followed:

1. Clean instruments to be sterilized shall first be sealed in peel-packs that contain either a sterilizer indicator or internal temperature indicator. The outside of the pack shall be labeled with the name of the instrument, the date sterilized, and the initials of the person operating the sterilizing equipment.
2. Sterilizers shall be loaded, operated, decontaminated and maintained according to manufacturer's directions, and shall meet all of the following standards:
 - Only equipment manufactured for the sterilization of medical instruments shall be used.
 - Sterilization equipment shall be tested using a commercial biological indicator monitoring system after the initial installation, after any major repair, and at least once per month. The expiration date of the monitor shall be checked prior to each use.
 - Each sterilization load shall be monitored with mechanical indicators for time, temperature, pressure, and, at a minimum, Class V integrators. The Class V integrator gives an immediate response on whether the sterilization has been achieved. Each individual sterilization pack shall have an indicator.
 - Biological indicator monitoring test results shall be recorded in a log that shall be kept on site for two years after the date of the results.
 - A written log of each sterilization cycle shall be retained on site for two years and shall include all of the following information:
 - (a) The date of the load.
 - (b) A list of the contents of the load.
 - (c) The exposure time and temperature.
 - (d) The results of the Class V integrator.
 - (e) For cycles where the results of the biological indicator monitoring test are positive, how the items were cleaned, and proof of a negative test before reuse.
3. Clean instruments and sterilized instrument packs shall be placed in clean, dry, labeled containers, or stored in a labeled cabinet that is protected from dust and moisture. Use clean gloves to handle sterilized packages to prevent cross contamination of the sterilized item when the package is opened for use.
4. Sterilized instruments shall be stored in the intact peel-packs or in the sterilization equipment cartridge until time of use.
5. Sterile instrument packs shall be evaluated at the time of storage and before use. If the integrity of a pack is compromised, including, but not limited to, cases where the pack is torn, punctured, wet, or displaying any evidence of moisture contamination, the pack shall be discarded or reprocessed before use.

6. A body art facility that does not afford access to a decontamination and sterilization area that meets the standards of subdivision (c) of Section 119314 of the California Health and Safety Code or that does not have sterilization equipment shall use only purchased disposable, single-use, pre-sterilized instruments. In place of the requirements for maintaining sterilization records, the following records shall be kept and maintained for a minimum of 90 days following the use of the instruments at the site of practice for the purpose of verifying the use of disposable, single-use, pre-sterilized instruments:

- A record of purchase and use of all single-use instruments.
- A log of all procedures, including the names of the practitioner and client and the date of the procedure.

OPERATING CONDITIONS FOR AUTOCLAVE

Cleaning: Remove all material on the instruments during the cleaning process to ensure that the sterilization process is achieved. The cleaning process can be a manual cleaning or by use of an ultrasonic machine.

Packaging: Package the instruments with hinges in the open position to ensure that the ridges and crevices of the instruments are sterilized.

Loading: Load the autoclave with the packages upright on their sides. Peel packs should be on edge with the plastic side next to a paper side to allow for steam penetration. Do not overload the autoclave to allow proper flow of the steam to achieve sterilization.

Steam Sterilization: Temperature should be 121°C or 250° F; pressure should be 106kPa (15lbs/in²); 30 minutes for packaged items. At a higher temperature of 132° C or 279° F, pressure should be 30 lbs/in²; 15 minutes for packaged items.

Allow all items to dry before removing them from the autoclave. Use clean gloves to handle packaged items.

Pressure settings (kPa or lbs/in²) may vary slightly depending on the autoclave used. Follow manufacturer's recommendations for your autoclave.

Exposure time begins only after the autoclave has reached the target temperature.

*Source: Adopted from Principles and Methods of Sterilization in Health Sciences.
JJ Perkins. 1983*

