

Manual on how a person can
**APPLY FOR A LICENSE TO
OPERATE A TATTOO STUDIO**

BASIC INFORMATION

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From time to time the process to apply for a license may change, so there will be regular updates of this manual. The aim is to provide increased access to online information.

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1. Introduction

The inspectorate within the Healthcare Standards Directorate monitors, inspects and regulates tattooing services to make sure that these studios meet fundamental standards of quality and safety. The names of licensed studios are published on the website so that the public is aware as to which establishments are licensed and thus have reinforced procedures for patient safety. This list can be accessed through <https://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/hcs/Pages/health-care-standards.aspx>.

The Directorate puts the health of the public at the centre of its work and strives to be rigorous, fair and consistent in its approach. The aim of this document is to provide basic information to any person applying for a license to operate a tattoo studio.

2. General information

- a. In Malta, tattooing is regulated by – [*The Control of Tattooing Act \(Chapter 270\)*](#);
- b. Tattooing is to be performed **ONLY** by licensed tattooists;
- c. It is illegal for a person to have in his possession or under his control any instrument, equipment, material or other object used for the purpose of tattooing, unless such person is in possession of a valid license;
- d. A valid tattooing license must be displayed in a conspicuous place within the waiting room of the tattoo studio where it may be easily observed by the public upon entering the establishment;
- e. The licensing office for tattoo studios is at the Health Care Standards Directorate (HCSD) within the Health Regulation Department;
- f. Opening Hours are from 7am till 2.45 pm Monday to Friday;

CONTACT DETAILS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

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(Inspection schedule, payment, collection of license)

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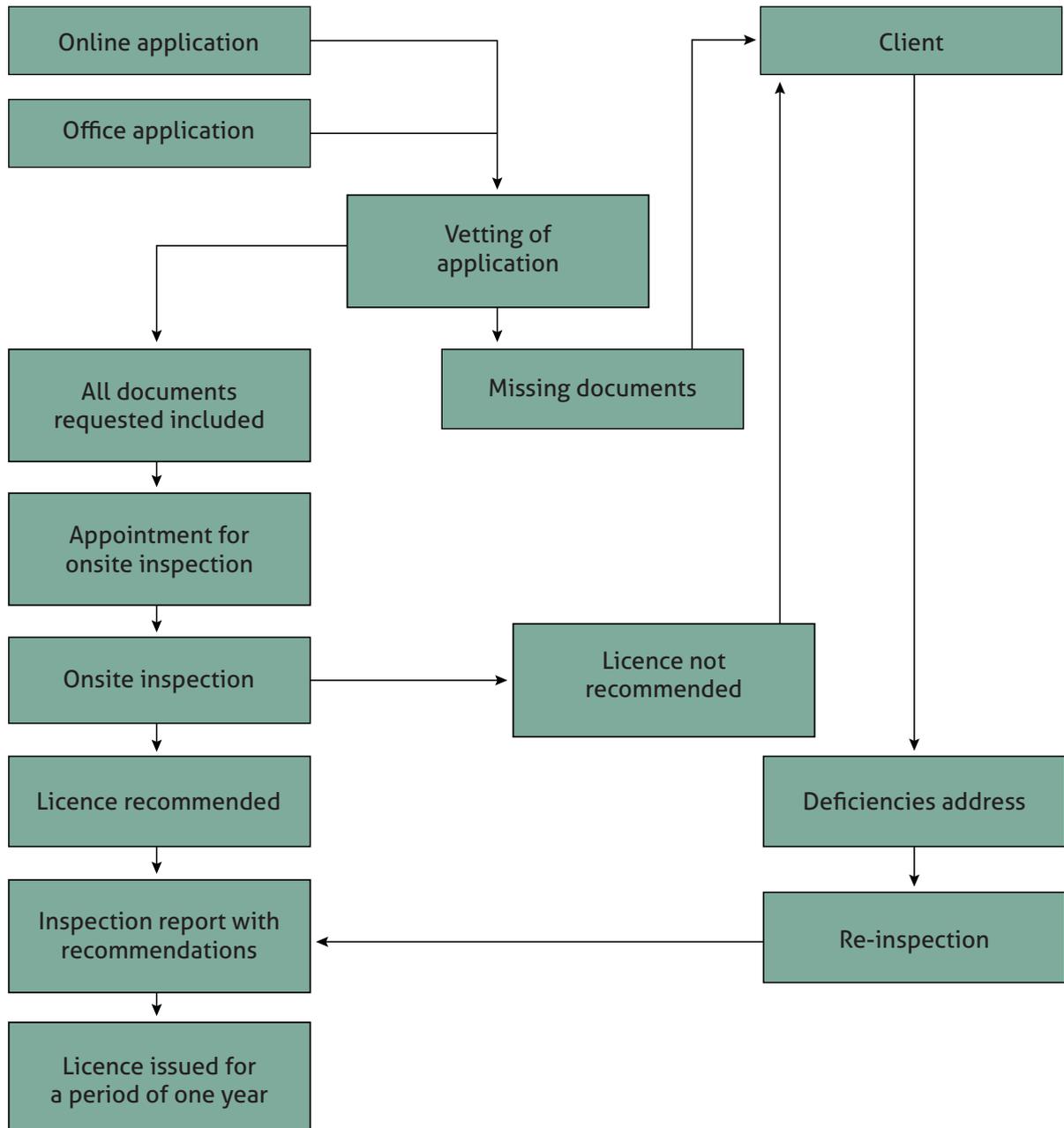
3. Applying for a license

- a. A person interested in providing tattooing services, must apply for a license as stipulated in The [Control of Tattooing Act \(Chapter 270\)](#);
- b. New applicants must be at least eighteen (18) years of age;
- c. One can apply for a license either by completing the [application form](#) or through the online application available at: <https://hcstandardsregistration.gov.mt/>
- d. When applying for a tattoo studio license, the following documents must be submitted:
 - A filled in [application form](#);
 - A certificate of competency in tattooing with special emphasis to knowledge on safe [infection control practices](#) which are in line with the requirements issued by the Health Care Standards Directorate. A Planning Authority (PA) permit showing the proposed premises including the site plan or a declaration by an architect, certifying that the premises carries a PA permit and that the premises can be used to provide tattooing services;
 - A Hepatitis B Vaccination record and an Anti HBs titre result;
 - A photocopy of the applicant's identity card;
 - If applying on behalf of a company, a copy of the Memorandum of Articles together with a declaration by the Director/s of the same company indicating that license is to be issued on the applicant's name;
 - For a third-country national to practice as a tattooist in Malta, one must apply for a work permit through Jobs Plus which can be reached on telephone number 22201290 or e-mail: jobsplus@gov.mt;

- e. Upon receiving the filled in application together with all the relevant documents, the licensing officer will vet the application accordingly;
- f. At this stage an onsite inspection is organised and the applicant is informed;
- g. An inspection team holding an authorisation badge will visit the premises. In case of a new establishment, a pre licensing visit may be requested by the applicant (recommended);
- h. A [self-assessment](#) check-list indicating the requirements to operate a tattoo studio will be sent to the applicant ten days prior to the inspection. This self-assessment will guide the applicant on what the inspection team will be expecting to find during the planned visit;
- i. During the inspection, the inspection team will verify if all conditions for licensing are satisfactory and will decide whether to recommend licensing or not;
- j. In cases where deficiencies are identified, a meeting with the applicant to advise and highlight the deficiencies needing attention will be held, this may necessitate a follow up visit;
- k. Once all conditions for licensing are satisfactory a license reflecting both the tattoo artist and the tattoo studio will be issued;
- l. The license includes a set of conditions. The tattooist must understand and comply with these conditions;
- m. Once licensing is recommended, the applicant is advised to pay an annual license fee of €12.90. The applicant may opt to collect the license from the HCSD licensing office or receive it by registered post.

4. The licensing process

The following flow chart outlines the procedure followed by the client and the inspectorate during the licensing process.



5. The tattoo studio

- a. The premises must have a Planning Authority permit;
- b. The studio must be kept clean and well maintained;
- c. A tattoo studio must have a separate waiting room and when the studio is being planned, the work station should only have access through the waiting room;
- d. Any plans for additional services **MUST** be included in the site plan submitted with the initial application;
- e. The studio must have adequate lighting and ventilation (mechanical or natural);
- f. The actual tattooing area must provide total privacy for the client;
- g. The studio walls must be painted with water repellent paint for easy cleaning;
- h. Toilet facilities must be available;
- i. Premises must have an efficient drainage system;
- j. Fire-fighting equipment must at least consist of a fire extinguisher bearing a valid expiry date;

6. The work station

- a. Work surfaces must be kept clean and well maintained and must be regularly washed with warm soapy water and wiped with a 70% alcohol solution. Work tops should be made of an impervious material for easy cleaning;
- b. Paper towels must always be available;
- c. There should be sufficient bench space to accommodate all the equipment used for tattooing procedures;
- d. A wash hand basin must be available within easy reach of the workstation/s and must be kept clean, well maintained and connected to the main drainage system. Single lever taps must have a supply of hot and cold water;
- e. Soap/suitable detergent and adequate drying facilities must be available near each wash hand basin;
- f. Client couches must be upholstered with an impervious type of material, which can be easily cleaned. Multiple couches must have a fixed partition between them for adequate client privacy;
- g. A proper sharps container must be available within each work station;
- h. A foot operated pedal bin lined with a disposable garbage bag must be available in each working station.

7. Lavatory facilities

- a. Lavatory facilities must be connected with the main drainage system and must always be kept clean and well maintained;
- b. There must be a proper functioning flushing apparatus;
- c. The wash hand basin within the lavatory room must have a supply of hot and cold water;
- d. Adequate hand washing/drying facilities must always be available;
- e. Proper ventilation must be present within the lavatory facilities (natural or mechanical);
- f. The lavatory facilities must have adequate lighting;
- g. Where possible lavatory facilities are to be accessible from the waiting room.

8. Tattooing instruments and other equipment

- a.** While not in use, all clean and ready-to-use instruments, dyes, carbons and stencils must be kept in a closed container, or clean storage cabinet. Sterile instruments must be kept in sterile packages or containers. Tattooing needles should be kept in their original box and all product information must be retained;
- b.** New disposable tattooing needles must be used for each client. It must be ensured that all disposables/consumables carry a brand, batch number, lot number and expiry date. Such information must be found both on the outer box and on the wrapping of each individual item;
- c.** If an autoclave is in use, a vacuum type B autoclave must be available, and the efficiency of the autoclave must be regularly tested. Results of such tests must be recorded for review during inspection;
- d.** Sterilized items must have an expiry date on each wrapper;
- e.** All sharps must be disposed of in special sharps containers that are rigid, puncture-resistant, and leak-proof and must be kept upright. Clinical waste must be collected by an approved Class D waste collector;
- f.** Any licensed tattooist selling any products related to tattooing must be in compliant with the Malta Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority regulations.

9. The Tattooist

- a. A licensed tattooist must attend for all seminars delivered by the Health Care Standards Directorate;
- b. The tattooist must be free from infectious diseases;
- c. While practicing, a tattooist cannot be under the influence of any alcohol and/or drugs;
- d. Additionally, tattooing cannot be performed on clients who are seen to be under the influence of alcohol and /or drugs thus unable to sign an informed consent;
- e. New disposable latex gloves must be worn during the whole procedure and must be changed with each client, gloves must be disposed of in an appropriate manner after use. Nitrile gloves are also to be made available to be used for clients who are allergic to latex. Gloves must **never** be washed and re-used;
- f. The tattooist must sign a declaration that he/she has read and understood the conditions of the license.

10. Aftercare

- a. Once the tattooing procedure is complete, the skin of the client is to be treated with a suitable disinfectant and completely covered with a sterile dressing;
- b. Each client must be given written [aftercare information](#). This information should include: tattooing aftercare; prevention and identification of infections; general care recommendations; information regarding the healing process; advice when to consult a doctor, signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction or any other factors delaying the healing process. Once the tattooing aftercare advice is provided and explained, each client has to sign on the client records sheet.

11. Additional guidelines

- a. **Record keeping:** records of each client must be kept in a secure place and are to be made available during an inspection. Information must include the name, age, and Identification number, address of client and date when the tattooing was carried out. Additionally, the tattooing site and notes taken regarding any old tattooing must also be recorded. These records must be signed and kept in total confidentiality for a period of at least 10 years; [client record sheet templates](#) Tattooing supplies are to be purchased from reputable suppliers and each item must be adequately labeled. Unbranded supplies are **not** to be used. All supplies must have a clear expiry date;
- b. Any leftover creams or any other solutions, which have been used on a client, **must not** be returned to the original container and must **not be used** on another client. Any applicator used for the dispensing of creams or any other solutions, **must not** be re-dipped into the original container and must be disposed of immediately after use;
- c. A tattoo studio must have a fully equipped first aid box;
- d. All practicing tattooists must be familiar with blood and body fluids spillage precautions;
- e. The client must be advised that any anesthetic cream containing medicinals such as Adrenaline and Lignocaine must be purchased, by means of a doctor's prescription, from a pharmacy before a tattooing procedure.

