



Sharps Containers in Personal Service Settings in Ontario

Sharps—such as needles, lancets, scissors, razor blades, microblades, and similar instruments capable of cutting or puncturing skin—are commonly used in many personal service settings (PSS) including tattooing, piercing, electrolysis, hairdressing and certain aesthetic services. In Ontario, the safe handling and disposal of sharps is regulated to protect both workers and clients from injuries and exposure to blood borne pathogens.

Under **Ontario Regulation 136/18: Personal Service Settings**, a sharps container is defined as a **puncture and leak resistant container with a fill line designed for the safe disposal of sharps**.

Improper disposal of sharps poses significant health risks, including potential exposure to **HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C**, and other blood borne pathogens. Ontario's PSS regulations are designed to minimize these risks by ensuring consistent, safe handling practices across all establishments that perform invasive or potentially invasive services.

Requirements for Sharps Disposal:

Ontario's public health guidelines emphasize that **all single use sharps and any sharps that have potentially come in contact with blood borne pathogens and cannot be high level disinfected must be discarded immediately after use into an approved sharps container**, which must be located in the service area where sharps are handled. Containers must never be filled beyond the marked fill line to prevent accidental injury or overflow.

Characteristics of Approved Sharps Containers:

Approved containers used in PSS settings must meet the following criteria:

- **Puncture resistant, leak proof, and tamper resistant construction**
- **Clearly identifiable biohazard symbol**
- **Tight-fitting lid**
- **Impenetrable by the sharp**

Safe Handling Practices: Operators **must not recap, bend, or break needles**. Contaminated sharps must never be transported loose or placed in regular garbage.

Below is a clear, practical Checklist for Sharps Container Use designed for Personal Service Settings (PSS) in Ontario, based on current provincial and public health requirements.

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Sharps Container Use Checklist (Ontario Personal Service Settings)

1. Container Requirements

- Use only an **approved sharps container** that is puncture resistant, leak proof, tamper resistant, and has a tight fitting lid.
- Ensure the container is **clearly marked with a biohazard symbol**.
- Confirm the container has a **visible fill line** and is designed specifically for sharps disposal as required under Ontario Regulation 136/18.

2. Placement and Accessibility

- Keep the sharps container **in the immediate service area** where sharps are used to allow immediate disposal.
- Ensure the container is **securely positioned** to prevent tipping or accidental contact.

3. Safe Disposal Practices

- Discard sharps **immediately after use**—do not set them down or carry them across the room.
- Do not fill the container past the fill line** to prevent overflow or accidental injury.
- Do not recap, bend, break, or remove needles** from syringes before disposal.
- Always use gloves and, if necessary, tongs when handling contaminated sharps.

4. Handling Contaminated Sharps

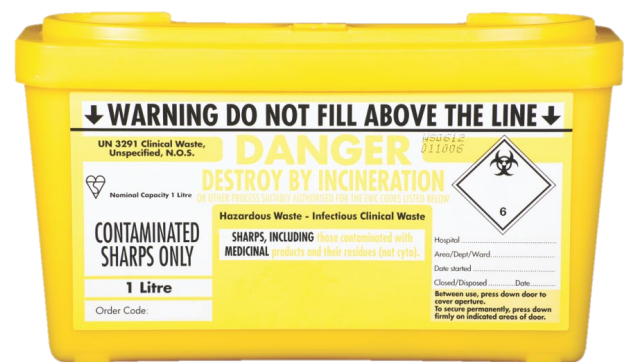
- Place contaminated sharps **directly into the sharps container at the point of use**—never into regular garbage or recycling.
- Treat all sharps as potentially contaminated with blood borne pathogens (HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C).

5. Maintenance and Replacement

- Replace the sharps container when it reaches the **fill line** or if damaged.
- Keep the container **closed when not in use** and secure it during storage or transport.

6. Documentation and Compliance

- Ensure procedures for sharps handling and disposal follow Ontario Regulation 136/18 requirements.
- Maintain records of any **accidental exposure incidents** as required for PSS operations.



Paraphenylenediamine (PPD) In Black Henna Temporary Tattoos, Cosmetics and Hair Dyes

PPD commonly known as 'Black henna' is an ingredient commonly found in hair dyes, temporary tattoo inks and some henna pastes. Natural henna is made from plant leaves and has been used for centuries. 'Black henna' is sometimes made from natural henna mixed with hair dyes that contain PPD to make the ink darker or to last longer on the skin.

Contrary to its name, Black henna products can come in various colours and forms such as powder, liquid or a paste – all of which may contain PPD.

PPD is listed as a **restricted** ingredient on Canada's Cosmetic Ingredient Hotlist. It can cause severe allergic reactions such as rashes, contact dermatitis, itching, blisters, swelling, pain or even anaphylaxis which can be life threatening. Allergic reactions to PPD can also make your skin sensitive to other products like hair dyes, sunscreen and even some dark coloured clothing! In Canada, the sale of products containing PPD which are intended for use **directly on the skin are banned**. This includes makeup products, henna and temporary tattoos. It is allowed in hair dyes however they must display specific warnings and directions for use.

What can you do to avoid PPD exposure to you and your clients?

- Always check the ingredient list in cosmetics and hair dyes.
- Ensure that PPD is not added to the ink or paste.
- Do not use any products with PPD listed in the ingredients OR if there is no label available for the product.
- Always follow the warning labels and manufacturers instructions for use on hair dyes and never use it on eyelashes or eyebrows. Doing so can cause severe inflammation of the eye or even blindness.
- Conduct a skin test with a small amount of product to ensure that the product can be used on the client's skin. To test the skin, clean a small area of skin behind the ear or on the inner forearm using either soap and water or alcohol, and apply a small quantity of the hair dye (as prepared for use) to the area. Allow to dry and wash the area with soap and water after 24 hours. If there is a reaction to the skin from the test, do not use the product. Always carry out the test before each application.

For more information, visit:

[Health Canada's Cosmetic Ingredient Hotlist](#) | [Health Canada - Black Henna Temporary Tattoos](#)



Choosing the Right Bleach as a Disinfectant in Your Personal Service Setting

Did you know that not all bleach products are suitable for disinfection in personal service settings? Whether you're cleaning tools, surfaces, or foot basins, choosing the correct bleach is essential for ensuring proper infection prevention and control.

Bleach products contain sodium hypochlorite, the active ingredient responsible for killing harmful microorganisms. However, only certain types of bleach meet the criteria needed for safe and effective disinfection in a personal service environment.

What to Look for When Selecting a Bleach Product

1. The Label Must Indicate Disinfectant Use

Always check the manufacturer's instructions. If the label only states "for laundering use", the product is not acceptable for disinfection in personal service settings. The bleach must explicitly state that it can be used as a disinfectant, otherwise it does not meet regulatory expectations.

2. Choose Bleach With at Least 5.25% Sodium Hypochlorite

A concentration of 5.25% sodium hypochlorite is preferred because it ensures proper dilution ratios can be achieved for effective disinfection.

For bleach products with other concentrations—or if you need help calculating exact volumes—use Public Health Ontario's Chlorine Dilution Calculator to prepare accurate solutions. [Chlorine Dilution Calculator](#)

3. A DIN Is Preferred, but Household Bleach May Still Be Acceptable

While most disinfectants require a Drug Identification Number (DIN) to confirm Health Canada approval, household bleach may not have a DIN and can still be considered an effective disinfectant, according to Public Health Ontario.

For guidance on preparing bleach safely and correctly, refer to [Preparing Household Bleach as a Disinfectant](#) fact sheet for measurements.

Your Responsibility as an Operator

Ultimately, it is up to each operator to ensure the bleach they choose is appropriate for their disinfection needs. Always research your product carefully and confirm it meets the minimum criteria for effective disinfection.

Selecting the right bleach helps protect your clients, your staff, and your business—one clean surface at a time.

Level Required	Preparation	Contact Time
High Level Disinfection 1:50 dilution (1 part bleach - 49 parts water) or 1:10 dilution (1 part bleach - 9 parts water)	10 mL bleach + 495 mL water 2 tsp bleach + 2 cups water	20 minutes
Intermediate Level Disinfection 1:50 dilution (1 part bleach - 49 parts water)	5 mL of bleach + 45 mL water 6 tsp bleach + 1 cup of water	10 minutes
Low Level Disinfection 1:500 dilution (1 part bleach - 499 parts water)	Footbaths 303 mL bleach + 15 L water 404 mL bleach + 20 L water or 1 1/2 cups bleach + 4 gallons water 1 3/4 cups bleach + 5 1/2 gallons water	10 minutes
	5 mL bleach + 2.5 L water 1 tsp bleach + 10 cups water	10 minutes

Notes:

- The above dilutions are based on use of household bleach at 5.25% sodium hypochlorite.
- For all other bleach strengths other than 5.25% or calculating different volumes, use the Chlorine Dilution Calculator at: https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/publichealth/bleach/bleach_dilution_calculator.aspx
- Use a proper cleaner before disinfecting area or equipment/device.
- The solution must be made fresh daily to prepare strength.

Durham Health Connection Line
905-668-2020 or 1-800-941-2729
dial 311 (within regional limits)
durham.ca/health

If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-641-3729

Prepared from: [Guidelines for the Use of Household Bleach as a Disinfectant in Personal Service Settings](#), Public Health Ontario, 2015

overview

What's NEW in 2026

Coming in 2026: Durham Region's NEW Personal Service Settings E-Learning Course!

A free, dynamic learning experience designed just for you!

Get ready, Durham Region personal service professionals—something big is on the way! Whether you work in a **salon or spa, tattoo or piercing studio**, or offer **aesthetic, manicure, or pedicure services**, this brand new **FREE Personal Service Settings (PSS) online course** is being built with you in mind.

Why You'll Love This Course

This isn't just another training module—it's your chance to deepen and reinforce your knowledge, sharpen your skills, and elevate the safety and professionalism of your business.

Participants will learn how to protect both clients and staff by understanding how infections spread—and how to stop them. You'll get the tools and confidence you need to create a safer, healthier environment for everyone who walks through your door.

Inside the Course

You'll gain exclusive insight into:

The Role of the Public Health Inspector

Ever wondered what inspectors look for during a visit? This course breaks it all down—no surprises, just transparency and empowerment.

Infection Prevention and Control Best Practices for Personal Service Settings

Master the essential Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) practices tailored specifically for your industry.

We'll guide you step-by-step, then reinforce your learning with interactive evaluations that help ensure you've got it down.

For Experienced Pros and Newcomers Alike

Durham Region Public Health recognizes the incredible skill and experience you bring to your work. This course builds on that foundation—helping you protect yourself and your clients, because any client may unknowingly carry an infectious disease.

Staying informed keeps everyone safe, and this training makes it easy with a certificate to show your commitment to excellence.

Accessible, Engaging, and 100% Free

- Free of charge
- Available online
- Offered in English
- Designed for convenient self paced learning
- Certificate of completion

Stay Tuned — Launching in 2026!

We can't wait to share this exciting new resource with you.

Keep an eye on future newsletters for updates, registration details, and sneak peeks!

Your commitment to safe, high quality service makes Durham Region shine—and this course will take that excellence even further.

ATTENTION! Special event application CHANGES for 2026

You want to host or participate in an event in Durham Region, as of 2026, special event application process timelines have changed.

Vendor applications must be received by the Health Department **at least 30 days prior to the event** to be considered.

Coordinator applications must be received by the Health Department **at least 45 days prior to the event** to be considered.

To download, fill out and save a vendor or coordinator application form, please select on the links provided:

- [Coordinator and organizer's application form](#)
- [Vendor's application form](#)
- [Guidelines for special events](#)

Please use the [PSS Special Event Application](#) link to submit your application online.

Let's work together to make your event run smoothly and safely!



Notification to Health Department: New Business, New Services or Construction/Alterations?

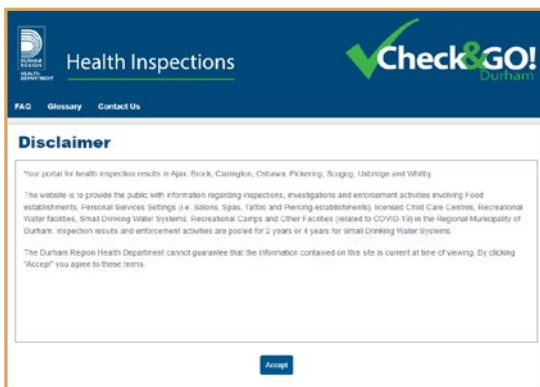
If you're planning to open a new personal service setting, introduce new services, or make any construction or alterations, you are required to notify the Health Department in writing at least 14 days in advance. Your notification should include:

- The intended opening or reopening date
- Details of all new services being offered
- The name and address of the operator

To notify the Health Department please visit:
[Personal Service Settings Notification Form](#)



Your facility's inspection reports for the past 2 years can be found [here](#).



**Next Issue release:
Fall/Winter 2026
We welcome
your ideas and
suggestions!**

We would like to remind all personal service setting owner/operators and staff that we welcome any suggestions for future article topics, ideas, and any comments you have, to improve the newsletter!

Please submit comments by email to EHL@durham.ca and indicate in the subject line "Personal Service Setting Newsletter Contribution".

The *Beyond Glam* Newsletter is published and distributed by Durham Region Health Department, Health Protection Division, and is distributed to personal service settings within Durham Region.

For any additional questions, please contact your area Public Health Inspector or the Durham Health Connection Line as this account is not monitored:

Contact Us

Durham Region Health Department, Health Protection Division

101 Consumers Drive, Whitby, Ontario L1N 1C4

Telephone (within regional limits): 311

Telephone: 905-668-2020 | Toll-Free: 1-800-841-2729 | Fax: 905-666-1887

Email: EHL@durham.ca



Thank You, Durham Region Health Department