



PUBLIC HEALTH PHI INSPECTS

GUIDE for OPERATORS
of Personal Service Settings





Niagara Region Guide for Operators of Personal Service Settings

This document is intended as a guideline only and is not a substitute for Ontario Regulation 136/18: Personal Service Settings, nor should it be interpreted as an official interpretation of the Regulation. It provides a list of recommended considerations for those planning to build, lease, rent, own, or operate a personal service setting. For detailed requirements, please refer to Ontario Regulation 136/18: Personal Service Settings.



Before Getting Started

1. **Notification to Public Health**

   Owners of personal service settings must notify Niagara Region Public Health and Emergency Services in writing at least 14 days before beginning operations.

   - Submit the notification by completing the form available at Niagara Region Public Health Business Resources, or by emailing **inspect@niagararegion.ca**
   - If you are planning renovations, relocating the business, or adding new services, written notification is required at least 14 days in advance

2. **Pre-Purchase Consultation**

   Consultation with a public health inspector is recommended before purchasing equipment or committing to a specific space. A public health inspector can confirm whether the facility and equipment comply with regulatory requirements.

3. **Prohibited Procedures**

   Certain procedures are strictly prohibited and cannot be sold, offered, or provided in personal service settings. These include:

   - Scleral (eyeball) tattooing
   - Implantation of eye jewelry under the conjunctiva (eyeball)
   - Ear candling or coning
   - Procedures involving live aquatic species (e.g. fish pedicures)

Administrative Requirements and Training

All operators of personal service settings are required to complete relevant health and safety training related to the operation and maintenance of the premises. This training should include practices that help prevent or reduce the risk of disease transmission. Key components of this training may include:

1. **Infection Prevention and Control Policies and Procedures**

   Operators should ensure that infection, prevention and control policies, procedures and training materials are developed, maintained and regularly updated.

   - Niagara Region Public Health and Emergency Services provide fact sheets tailored to different types of services. These can be accessed on their website.
   - The Windsor-Essex County Health Unit offers free online education modules for personal service setting operators in both English and Vietnamese, available at: **learn.wechu.org**

2. **Manufacturer's Instructions for Equipment and Instruments**

   Ensure that all manufacturer's instructions or manuals for equipment and instruments are accessible on-site. Electronic copies are acceptable if all operators have access to them.

3. **Reprocessing Policies and Procedures**

   It is strongly recommended to develop and maintain policies and procedures for the reprocessing of tools, instruments, and equipment.

4. **Accidental Exposure Response Policy**

   A policy and procedure for responding to accidental exposures to blood or body fluids should be established. Please refer to the personal services settings webpage at **niagararegion.ca** for reporting forms and more information.

Record Keeping

Effective record-keeping is crucial as it ensures transparency, accountability, and compliance with safety standards. Detailed and accurate records not only support the quality of care but also provide a traceable history of procedures, equipment usage, and safety protocols. This documentation is essential for monitoring and maintaining public health standards. As such, records must be accessible and readily available to public health inspectors upon request.

1. **Client Records**
    - Client records must be collected and maintained on-site. At minimum, name and contact information (e.g. phone number, email) is to be provided.
    - Clients who refuse to provide their name and contact information are not permitted to receive services
    - For premises that only offer hair dressing and barbering services, collection of client information is a best practice but not required
2. **Invasive Procedure Records**
    - Records for invasive procedures must include details of the procedure performed and the body part involved, the name(s) and contact information of both the client and provider, confirmation that required information was provided to the client, the date of the procedure, and the lot number(s) and expiry date(s) of the sterile equipment used
3. **Accidental blood and bodily fluid exposure forms**
    - Records related to accidental exposures to blood or body fluids must include the date of exposure, the service being provided at the time, the body part affected, the name and contact information of the person providing the procedure, the actions taken in response to the exposure and the name and contact details of the person who was exposed
4. **Disinfection records**
    - Disinfection records must include the name and concentration of the disinfectant, the date it was prepared (if applicable), and the date by which it must be discarded (if applicable)
5. **Sterilization records**
    - For businesses who have a sterilizer on-site, records must include the name and type of sterilizer used, the date and time of use and the equipment sterilized
    - Details of any maintenance or repairs and the sterilizer's functionality afterward must be recorded. Results of any tests or checks performed on the sterilizer are to be recorded as well.

Setting Requirements

Setting clear requirements for personal service settings is essential to minimize the risk of infection, injury, and other hazards by establishing best practices for sanitation, equipment use and professional conduct. By defining these requirements, we create a consistent framework that fosters a safe environment where clients can confidently receive services while reducing the risk of harm.

1. **Hand Wash Sink**
   - One dedicated hand wash sink must be located near the work area and accessible at all times. This sink cannot be used for cleaning tools or reprocessing.
   - The sink must have potable hot and cold running water under pressure, liquid soap in a dispenser and a method for hand drying

2. **Reprocessing Area**
   - A designated area for cleaning, disinfecting, and/or sterilizing tools and equipment must be provided, including a sink large enough to immerse the largest piece of equipment used
   - Sufficient space is required for cleaning, drying and disinfecting/sterilizing equipment, separate from service areas
   - A workflow from “dirty-to-clean” should be established to prevent cross-contamination of clean equipment
   - Hand sanitizer must be available in the reprocessing area, as the reprocessing sink cannot be used for hand washing

3. **Water Supply**
   - The facility must have both hot and cold running, potable water at all times. If water access is lost, services cannot be provided.

4. **Surfaces and Furniture**
   - All surfaces and furniture must be in good repair, smooth, non-absorbent, and easy to clean
   - Floors, walls and ceilings must also be well-maintained and easy to clean
   - Damaged items must be replaced promptly, as they may be difficult to clean and could harbour microorganisms. Taping of damaged surfaces is not acceptable.

5. **Sharps Disposal**
   - Sharps containers must be located in close proximity to where services involving sharps are provided. A second sharps container in the reprocessing area is optional but not required, as sharps should be disposed of at the point of use and should not enter the reprocessing area.

6. **Waste Disposal**
   - Adequate waste receptacles must be provided for garbage and dirty laundry
   - Laundry bins or baskets used for transporting dirty laundry must be disinfected before storing clean laundry. Single-use liners are acceptable.

7. **Washrooms**
   - Washrooms must be maintained in a sanitary condition and adequately supplied
   - Reprocessing cannot occur in washrooms

8. **Hand Sanitizer**
   - Alcohol-based hand sanitizer (70-90% alcohol) must be available within reach of all service areas
   - Hand sanitizer must be within its expiry date and display a valid Natural Product Number on the bottle



General Requirements for Personal Service Settings

Topic Area	Requirements
Notifications	☐ Owner or owner's agent shall notify the medical offices of health or public health inspector in writing at least 14 days before opening or renovating and/or restructuring the personal service setting ☐ Results of any inspections conducted by a public health inspector are posted in accordance with the inspector's request
Premises	☐ Must be free from health hazards or conditions that adversely affect the sanitary operation of the personal service setting ☐ Floors, walls, ceilings, fixtures and furniture of the setting must be in good repair, easily cleaned and with a smooth non-absorbent finish ☐ It is not used as a dwelling or for dining, sleeping or preparing, selling, handling, eating or storing food ☐ Work area must be well lit ☐ Has biomedical and laundry waste receptacles
Sink (Hand Washing Only)	☐ Has at least one sink used only for hand washing that is: - Conveniently located to the work area - Easily accessible - Continuously supplied with potable hot and cold water - Has dispensable liquid soap and single-use hand towels
Sink (Not for Hand Washing)	☐ Has at least one sink that is not the hand wash sink that: - Can immerse the largest piece of reuseable equipment used at the setting - Is continuously supplied with hot and cold running water - Has adequate counter space to prepare the reuseable equipment for use - Is not located in a room with a toilet - Is sufficiently separated from where personal services are provided
Sharps (i.e. Needles, Syringes, Scalpels and Razor Blades)	☐ Are sterile and for a single use ☐ Must be from packaging that has not been previously opened, damaged or compromised in any way ☐ All sharps are to be disposed of in a sharps container immediately after use
Sharps Container	☐ Compliant with standards of the Canadian Standards Association ☐ Disposed of in accordance with the requirements of the Environmental Protection Act
Training	☐ Every operator of a personal services setting shall undertake any health and safety training related to personal service setting operation and maintenance

Topic Area	Requirements
Equipment	☐ Maintained in good repair and in a sanitary condition ☐ Maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions (if any) ☐ Manufacturer's instructions are accessible to the person providing a service ☐ If no manufacturer's instructions are available, maintained in accordance with the directions of a medical officer of health or public health inspector ☐ All reuseable equipment is cleaned and disinfected or sterilized between each use ☐ All reuseable equipment is covered with a single-use disposable cover, the cover is discarded immediately after each use ☐ All equipment that is designed for a single-use is discarded immediately after it has been used
Animals	☐ Personal services setting is kept free from animals, including birds, aquatic species and reptiles, this does not apply to service animals and live aquatic species displayed or stored in sanitary tanks
Products	☐ Stored and dispensed in a manner which prevents contamination
Disinfectants (not including chlorine bleach/sodium hypochlorite)	☐ Have a Drug Identification Number or Natural Product Number assigned by Health Canada ☐ Are used as per the manufacturer's instructions (where available)
Sterilizers	☐ Are suitable for sterilizing the equipment used at the personal services setting ☐ Meet the standards established by Health Canada and the Canadian Standards Association ☐ If a sterilizer has failed to adequately sterilize the operator shall: - In writing, inform anyone who provides personal services at the setting of the sterilizer failure and any actions to be taken to prevent disease transmission - Use any alternate method of sterilization as specified by a medical officer of health or public health inspector - The sterilizer cannot be used after a failed spore test - Items must be reprocessed using a different validated sterilizer or single-use alternatives
Hygiene Practices of Operators	☐ Practices good personal hygiene ☐ No smoking while providing a service ☐ Cleans their hands to remove visible soil and kill microorganisms from the hands before and after providing a personal service

Equipment/Instrument Requirements

Proper handling, cleaning and disposal of equipment is essential to maintaining safe and hygienic environments in personal service settings. This will ensure the health and safety of both clients and service providers.

- Single-use equipment must be discarded immediately after each client. This equipment is not to be reprocessed or reused on clients.
- Multi-use equipment must be cleaned and disinfected after each client. Equipment and instruments must be in good condition and easy to clean. Damaged or rusting equipment must be replaced. Equipment that cannot be cleaned and disinfected cannot be used on clients.
- Sharps used for invasive services must be sterile and single use
  - The packaging must not be previously opened or compromised in any way and it must have a lot number and expiry date available
  - Sharps must be discarded in an approved sharps container after use
- Soak tubs, pedi-thrones, or basins must be cleaned and disinfected after each client
- Clean equipment must be stored separately from dirty equipment and protected from contamination
  - Clean equipment should be stored in clean, covered containers and be labelled “CLEAN”. Clean equipment that is stored loosely in drawers or in service areas can easily become contaminated before it is used on clients.
  - Containers storing dirty equipment should also be labelled “DIRTY”

These items are used on one client only, then thrown away



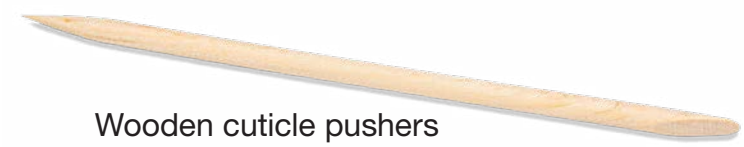
Emery boards



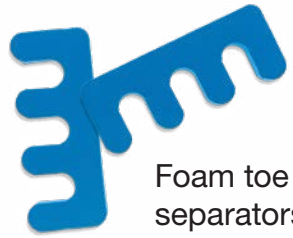
Sanding bands



Pedicure razor blades



Wooden cuticle pushers



Foam toe separators



Foam or paper slippers



Nail buffers



Hindo stones

These items need to be cleaned and disinfected between each client



Nail clippers



Nippers



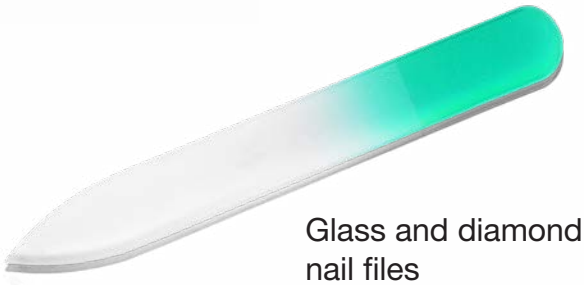
Metal nail drill bits



Foot paddles



Acrylic nail brushes



Glass and diamond nail files



Hand baths



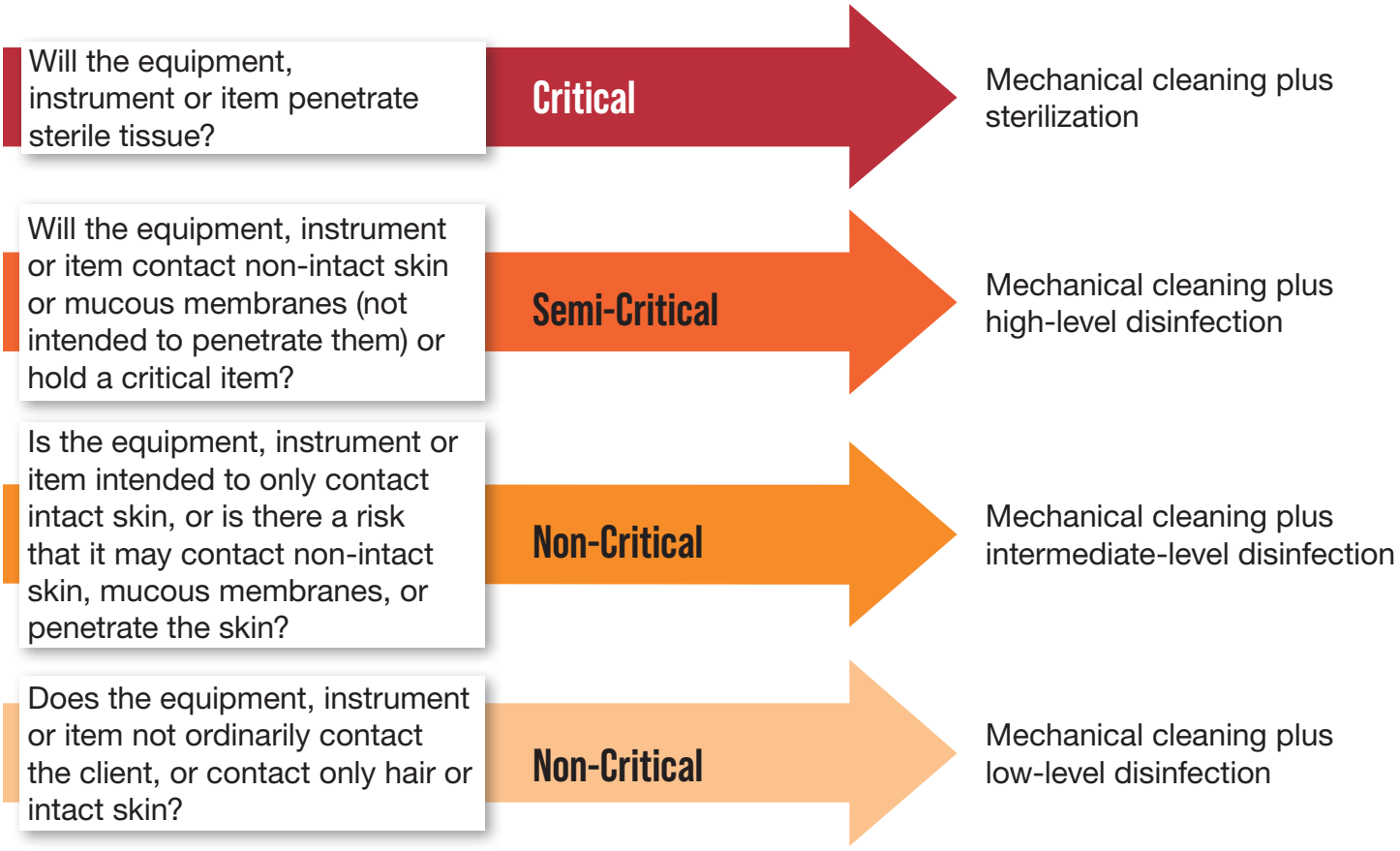
Foot baths

Reprocessing for Equipment and Instruments

Reprocessing refers to the process (e.g. cleaning, disinfection, packaging, sterilization) of rendering potentially contaminated reusable equipment and instruments safe for use.

There are levels of reprocessing required based on classification of equipment and instruments:

- **Tattoo, piercing, or electrolysis needles** – Needles used for tattooing, body piercing, and electrolysis go into the skin and are therefore high-risk (critical) items that must be completely sterile, which is why the safest practice is to use pre-packaged, pre-sterilized, single-use needles that are opened in front of the client, used once, and then thrown away immediately.
- **Tweezers used to expose and remove ingrown hairs** – If tweezers are in contact with non-intact skin, they are classified as **semi-critical** and require cleaning followed by **high-level disinfection**
- **Nail clippers or nippers** – These items are designed to trim nails and cuticles but may accidently penetrate the skin, they are classified as **non-critical, (intermediate-level disinfection)**, and require cleaning followed by **intermediate-level disinfection**
- **Hair-cutting scissors** – These items are designed to only contact hair and sometimes intact skin, they are classified as **non-critical (low-level disinfection)**, and require cleaning followed by **low-level disinfection**. Although the instrument is non-critical, if the scissors come into contact with non-intact skin, mucous membranes, or penetrate the skin, the instrument becomes **non-critical (intermediate-level disinfection)**, requiring cleaning followed by **intermediate-level disinfection**.



Classes of Equipment and Instruments

Critical	Semi-critical	Non-critical	Non-critical
Sterilization	High-level disinfection	Intermediate-level disinfection	Low-level disinfection
Equipment and instruments or items that penetrate the skin or enter sterile tissue. Other tattoo, piercing, or body modification equipment with high risk of transmission if contaminated. 	Equipment and instruments or items that contact mucous membranes or non-intact skin (i.e., skin that has been compromised in some way, such as cracked, chapped, with cuts, abraded, or with a rash), but do not ordinarily penetrate the skin. Also includes items that hold, manipulate or contact critical items. 	Equipment and instruments or items that are intended to contact only intact skin, but that may accidentally come into contact with non-intact skin or mucous membranes or penetrate the skin.  	Equipment and instruments or items that do not directly contact the client or contact only hair or intact skin. 

Requirements for Cleaning and Disinfection and Sterilization (Reprocessing)

All reprocessing must occur in a designated reprocessing area. The handwash sink and the washroom cannot be used for reprocessing.

Cleaning Equipment

- All multi-use equipment must be thoroughly cleaned with soap and water to remove physical debris before disinfection or sterilization
- A brush should be made available to scrub physical debris off of equipment, if necessary
- Ensure that instruments are thoroughly dried before the disinfectant step

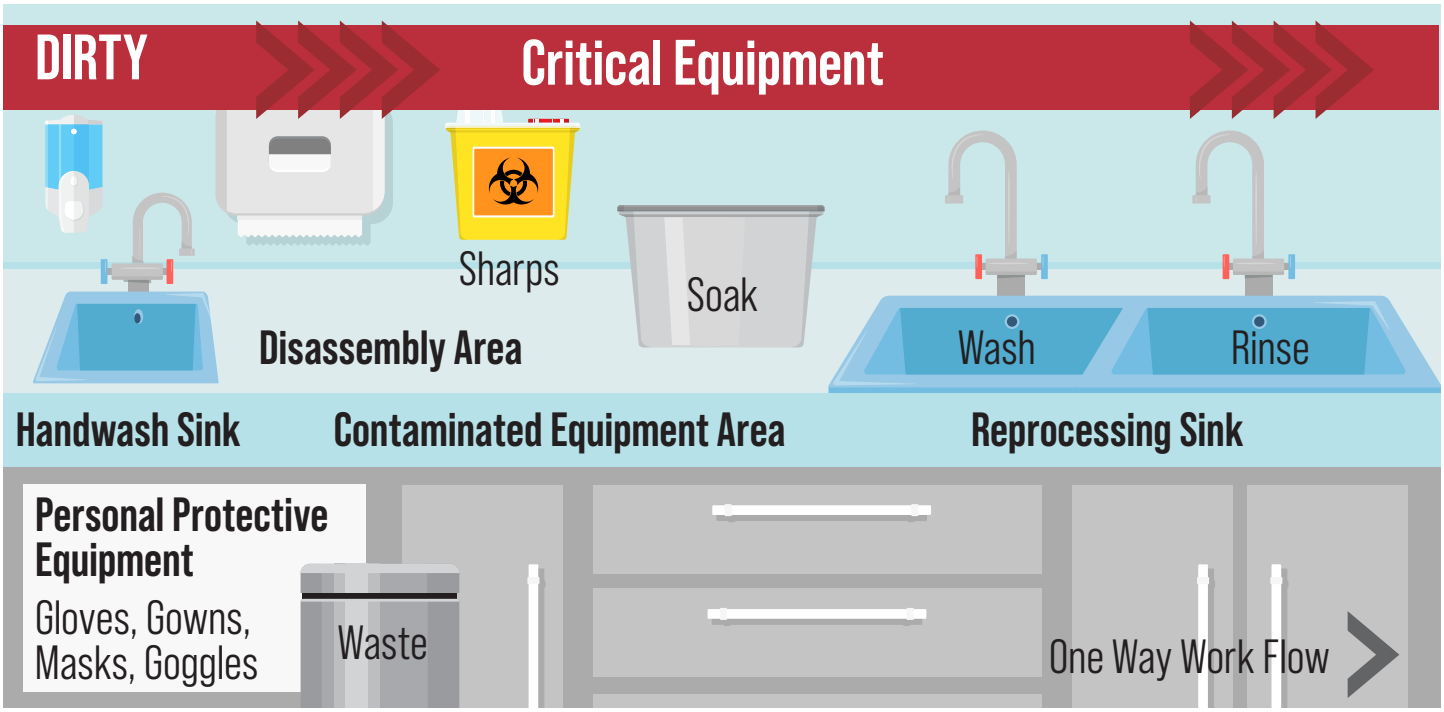
Approved Disinfectants

- Any disinfectants that are used (except for bleach) must have a drug identification number or a natural product number present on the bottle or label. This verifies the product is approved for use by Health Canada.
- Disinfectants that do not have a drug identification number or natural product number are not permitted for use
- Appropriate disinfectants must be used for different types of equipment. See the charts in the section below to determine what type of disinfectant you need or contact your public health inspector.

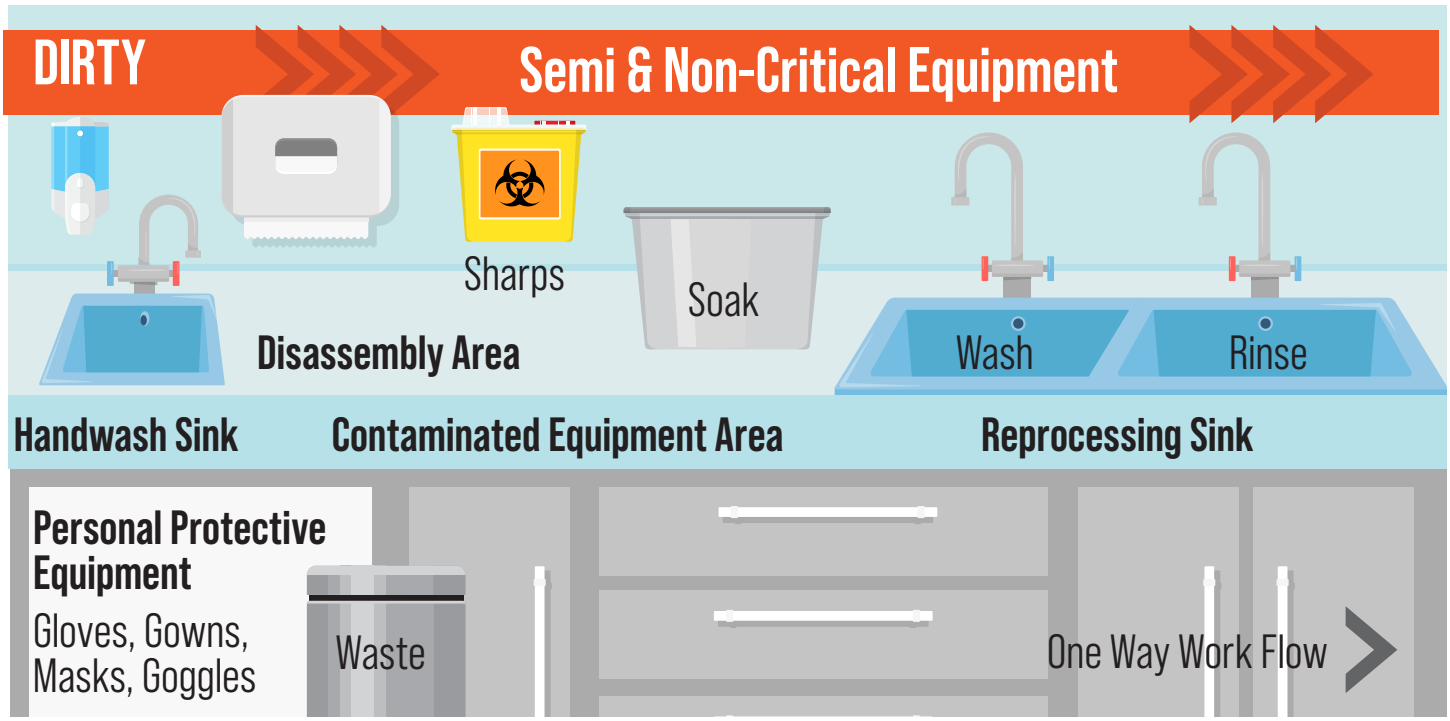
Wet equipment can dilute disinfectants or compromise sterility

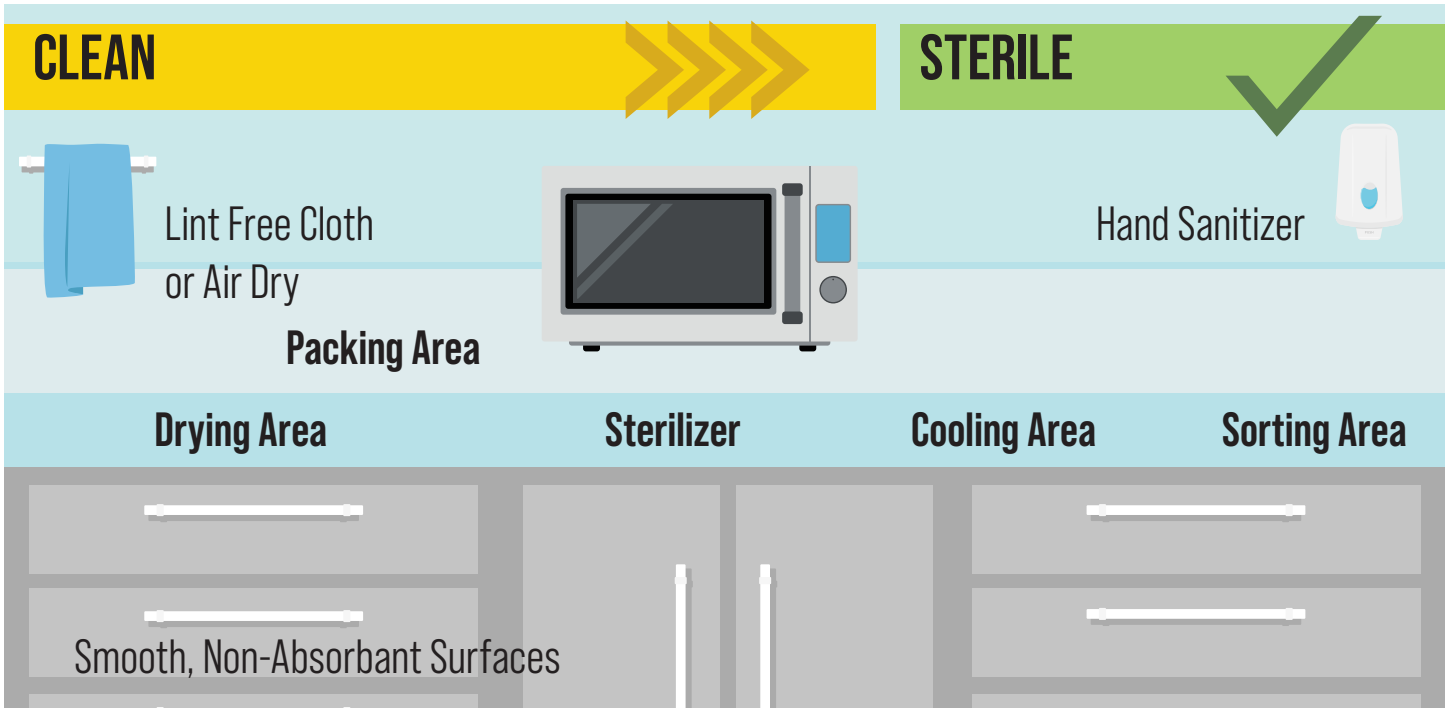
- Always read and follow the manufacturer's instructions on the disinfectant label
- Ensure the disinfectant is prepared according to the instructions and is not expired
- Ensure equipment and instruments are fully submerged in the disinfectant for the required contact time, as specified by the manufacturer

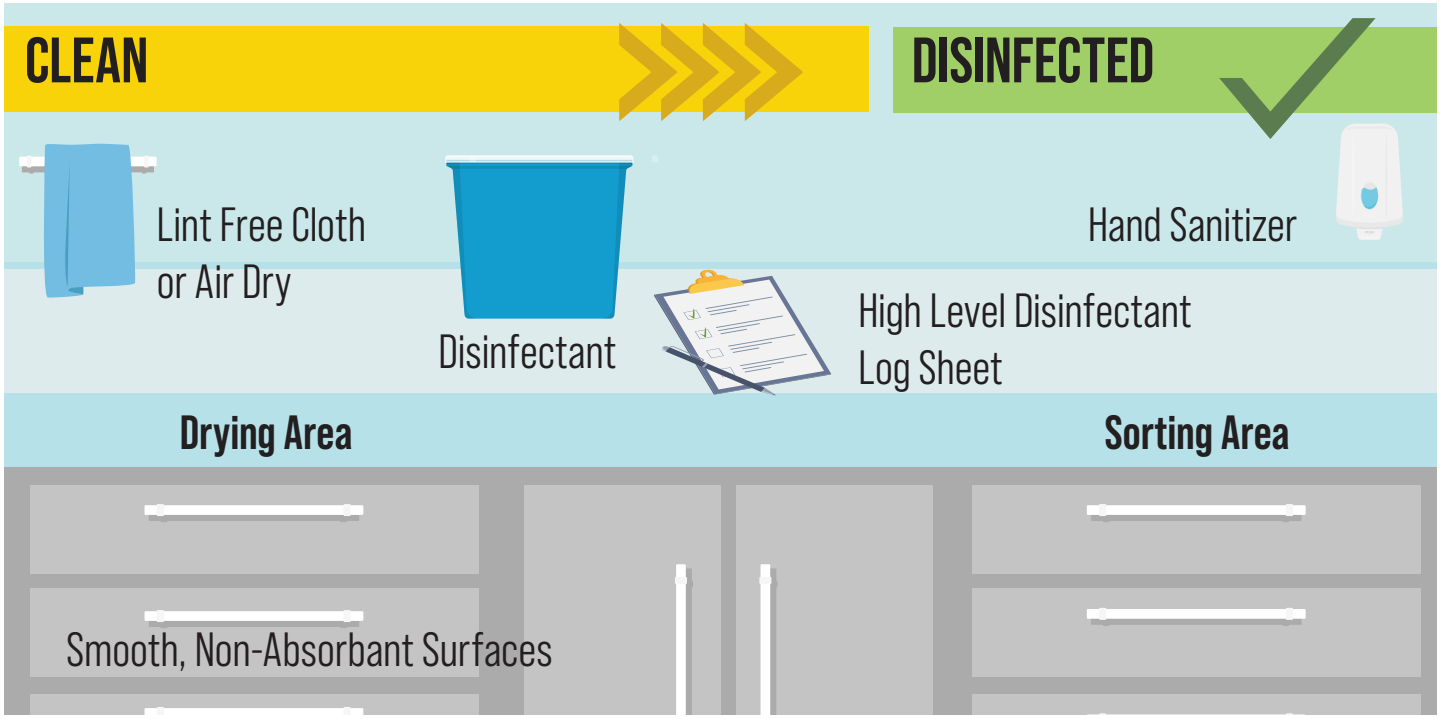
Reprocessing with Sterilization



Reprocessing




CLEAN
STERILE
Lint Free Cloth
or Air Dry
Packing Area
Hand Sanitizer
Drying Area
Sterilizer
Cooling Area
Sorting Area
Smooth, Non-Absorbant Surfaces


CLEAN
DISINFECTED
Lint Free Cloth
or Air Dry
Disinfectant
Hand Sanitizer
High Level Disinfectant
Log Sheet
Drying Area
Sorting Area
Smooth, Non-Absorbant Surfaces

Surface Cleaning and Disinfection



The environmental surfaces in a personal service setting may be classified as low-risk or high-risk. This classification is based on the potential for the surfaces to act as vehicles for the transmission of microorganisms from blood and/or other body fluids.

Low-risk surfaces are potentially less likely to be contaminated with or come in contact with blood, body fluids and/or non-intact skin. These surfaces are to be cleaned and disinfected with a low-level disinfectant immediately when they become visibly soiled and at least once per day. Protective covers are to be changed between clients.

Examples of low-risk environmental surfaces include:

- Manicure/pedicure tables or chairs/foot stools covered with protective covers
- Tattoo/massage/facials/waxing tables/beds covered with protective covers
- Hairdressing/barbering chairs or sinks for hair washing

High touch surfaces are surfaces or objects within a personal service setting that are frequently touched by multiple clients or workers throughout the day and therefore, have a higher likelihood of becoming contaminated. This increased risk requires more frequent cleaning and disinfection as part of routine infection prevention and control.

Examples of high-risk environmental surfaces include:

Surface Type	Required Cleaning Frequency
Client beds/chairs	After every client
Workstation surfaces	After every client
Shared equipment (e.g., chair levers, lamp switches)	Between clients (if used), otherwise routinely
High touch fixtures (doorknobs, light switches, faucets, payment terminals)	Routinely throughout the day and when soiled
Reusable tools	After every client (clean and disinfect/sterilize)

Disinfection Chart

This chart contains infection, prevention and control best practices for disinfection of sem-critical and non-critical items in personal service settings. It is not intended to be inclusive of all approved high, intermediate and low-level disinfectants. Information adapted from the Durham Region Department of Health.

HIGH Level of disinfection
Semi-critical (or items that hold/contact critical items)

- Kills all microorganisms (bacteria, fungi and viruses) except bacterial spores
- Use on semi-critical items
- Items that come into contact with non-intact skin or mucous membranes but do not penetrate them

Disinfectant (Active Ingredients)	Contact Times (Approximately)	Advantages	Disadvantages
1:50 chlorine bleach + solution (1 part bleach and 49 parts water) 1,000 ppm (parts per million)	20 minutes	Inexpensive: fast-acting	Corrodes metal, may destroy adhesives with prolonged soaking
2% glteraldehyde **(not recommended for personal services settings)**	45 minutes Follow manufacturer's instructions	Non-corrosive to metal, rubber or plastics; reuseable	Toxic fumes; expensive
6% hydrogen peroxide	45 minutes Follow manufacturer's instructions	Environmentally friendly; no residue	Oxidizing properties may be destructive to some equipment (brass, zinc, copper and nickel/silver)
7% stabilized hydrogen peroxide	30 minutes Follow manufacturer's instructions	Environmentally friendly; no residual irritant to skin or to respiratory tract	Oxidizing properties may be destructive to some equipment (brass, zinc, copper and nickel/silver)
0.55% ortho-phthalaldehyde (OPA)	10 minutes Follow manufacturer's instructions	Fast-acting; no mixing needed	Stains proteins; expensive

INTERMEDIATE Level of disinfection
Non-critical, Intermediate – Level Disinfection

- Kills most bacteria, fungi and viruses
- Use on semi-critical items
- Items that come into contact with non-intact skin or mucous membranes but do not penetrate them

Disinfectant (Active Ingredients)	Contact Times (Approximately)	Advantages	Disadvantages
70-90% isopropyl alcohol	10 minutes	Fast-acting; leaves no residue	Can damage rubber and plastics; flammable
70-90% Ethyl alcohol	10 minutes	Fast-acting; leaves no residue	Can damage rubber and plastics
1:50 chlorine bleach + (1 part bleach and 49 parts water 1000 ppm	10 minutes	Inexpensive; fast-acting	Corrodes metal; may destroy adhesives with prolonged soaking

LOW Level of disinfection
Non-critical. Low Level Disinfection

- Kills some bacteria, fungi and viruses
- Use on non-critical items
- Items that contact intact skin and not mucous membranes or items that do not ordinarily touch the client
- May be used for routine housekeeping

Disinfectant (Active Ingredients)	Contact Times (Approximately)	Advantages	Disadvantages
Quaternary ammonium	Follow manufacturer's instructions	Good cleaning agent for environmental surfaces	Cannot be used on instruments; not recommended as an antiseptic
1:500 chlorine bleach + solution (1 part bleach and 499 parts water) 100 ppm	< 10 minutes	Inexpensive; fast-acting	Corrodes metal; may destroy adhesives with prolonged soaking
3% hydrogen peroxide	10 minutes	Environmentally safe	Oxidizing properties may be destructive to some equipment (brass, zinc, copper and nickel/silver)
Phenols	Follow manufacturer's instructions	Easy to obtain; cleans and disinfects	Residual phenols on porous materials may cause tissue irritation even when thoroughly rinsed; for environmental surfaces only

General Hygiene Requirements

To ensure the health and safety of both clients and service providers, it is crucial to follow proper hygiene protocols, including regular handwashing and appropriate glove use. Avoid providing services on clients with visible infections or open wounds.

- Hand hygiene must occur before and after each client
  - If hands are visibly soiled, service providers must wash their hands with soap and water at a dedicated hand wash sink
  - If hands are not visibly soiled, hand sanitizer (alcohol-based hand rub) can be used
- Single-use gloves must be worn when there is potential contact with blood or body fluids, non-intact skin, mucous membranes or contaminated surfaces. Gloves are also required during invasive procedures (i.e., body piercing, tattooing, micro-pigmentation, micro-blading, micro-needling).
- Providers must refrain from eating, drinking or smoking while providing personal services

- Services should not be performed on areas of the client's body with open wounds, cuts, rashes, sores, lice, or visible infections (e.g., nail fungus). Clients with fungal infections or other skin conditions should be advised to consult their healthcare provider for treatment. Operators should not provide fungal treatments or medications.

Animals

No animals, including birds, aquatic species and reptiles, are permitted in the personal service setting except for:

- Service animals described in subsection 80.45 (4) of Ontario Regulation 191/11 (Integrated Accessibility Standards) made under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
- Live aquatic species displayed or stored in sanitary tanks

Home-Based Premises

Home-based personal service settings are permitted, but they must comply with all regulations to ensure safety and hygiene. Home-based premises must:

- Not provide personal services in a room or part of a room that is used as a living space, such as dining, sleeping, or food preparation, storage or handling areas
- Contact your municipality to inquire about zoning by-laws and business licensing requirements
- Ensure pets are restricted from accessing service and reprocessing areas

Sterilization Requirements

Sterilization is the method of reprocessing required for critical items because it can destroy or irreversibly inactivate all forms of microbial life present on an object including vegetative bacteria, bacterial spores, fungi, fungal spores, and viruses. The preferred method for decontamination of heat-resistant equipment and instruments is steam sterilization. Sterilizers used at a PSS are to be suitable for sterilizing the equipment and are to meet the standards established by Health Canada and the CSA Group. It must be licensed through the Medical Device License Listing with Health Canada. All equipment used for sterilization at the premises must be maintained and used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Sterilization processes must be monitored to ensure they are effective. Monitoring for sterilization includes mechanical, biological (spore tests), and chemical indicators; all three processes are essential and are to be used.

Mechanical

Mechanical monitoring verifies that the conditions for sterilization were achieved in the chamber during the cycle. Mechanical indicators (e.g., mechanical printouts from the sterilizer) are to be checked and signed for each sterilizer cycle.

- The actual time of the sterilization phase during the cycle. This is the length of time that the sterilization temperature was maintained and is not the same as the total cycle time;
- The actual temperature during the sterilization phase; and
- The actual pressure reached and maintained during the sterilization process.

Chemical

Chemical indicators are to be used appropriately to verify sterilization.

- A Type 1 Indicator is to be used on the outside of each package or cassette undergoing sterilization
- A Type 4 Chemical Indicator is to be used on the inside of each package or cassette undergoing sterilization
- Best Practice: a Type 5 Chemical Integrator should be used in each package or cassette to verify time, temperature and steam quality

Biological

Biological monitoring verifies the ability of the sterilizer to kill microorganisms. Prior to use, a new, repaired or relocated sterilizer must pass three consecutive spore tests. An actively used sterilizer must be tested at least once every two weeks to ensure that the sterilizer is adequately destroying micro-organisms. Tests must be placed in a full load in the sterilizer being tested and submitted to an accredited lab in a timely manner.

Written back-up plans including recall and notification procedures in the event of a failed spore test must be created, made readily available, and reviewed annually. Niagara Region Public Health and Emergency Services must be contacted immediately following notification of a failed spore test.

Records

Sterilization records are to include:

- The name, model and serial number of sterilizers
- The equipment/instrument(s) that was sterilized with the date and time of when the sterilizer was used
- Physical parameters of each load including the date, length of time the sterilization temperature was maintained, the temperature during sterilization, the pressure reached and maintained during sterilization
- Preventative maintenance or repairs and whether sterilizer functioned properly after maintenance and repair
- Results of any checks or tests done



Niagara Region Public Health
and Emergency Services
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905-688-8248 or 1-888-505-6074 ext. 7590
niagararegion.ca

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