

Home Cosmetic Tattoo Parties

by Marjorie Grimm, CPCP

Oh the joys of the 60's and 70's where our social networking opportunities were often Tupperware, jewelry or fashion parties. What a great time to get together for an afternoon or night out away from other obligations and just have some fun with friends and shop as well. It didn't get any better than that.

Unfortunately, the idea of home parties, still very popular in some areas of shopping but often replaced by the Home Shopping Network and convenient shows of a similar nature, cosmetic tattooing has found its way into home social networking as well.

This could not be a more unprofessional and dangerous idea. A person wouldn't dream of allowing a dentist or physician come to their home and extract a tooth in the living room, or surgically remove a mole in the kitchen, so why would someone consider allowing a person to tattoo them under those same conditions?

Here are the facts. Tattooing is an invasive procedure. In every state, there are laws that, as a minimum, enforce the conditions under which tattooing is performed. These regulatory requirements cite disinfectants that are to be used, cross contamination prevention that includes the use of barrier film, personal protection equipment, engineering protocols for disposal of sharps used for the procedure, proper handling and disposal of rubbish and other protocols intended to keep the client and the technician safe, during and after the procedure.

The attendee of a home permanent cosmetic party is missing out on any or all of the following:

Business License. To operate a business where money exchanges for services rendered, the technician must have an active business license with the city where the services are performed, at the address reflected on the business license.

Liability Insurance. Some states require liability insurance, but nonetheless, regardless of state mandates, most professional permanent cosmetic technicians carry liability insurance in the event the client is dissatisfied with the outcome of the procedure, or medical intervention is needed (rare but possible).

Bloodborne Pathogen Training. OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens Standard training certificate of attendance is a universal requirement for all professionals who have the potential of coming in contact with body fluids while completing the duties of their profession. Cosmetic tattoo artists are included in the professional groups who are expected to train in and practice these standards. A certificate of class attendance is the client's assurance that the technician is aware of the dangers of cross contamination and was trained to prevent them.

Compliance with Law. Compliance with state, county and city ordinances that dictate the conditions that tattooing permits and licenses are issued; often are also accompanied by a compliance inspection.

Sterility. Proof of sterile machine components and needles that are used for a procedure.

Disposal of Sharps. Proper disposal of sharps and items that may be contaminated with bloodborne pathogens during the procedure.

Sanitary Environment. A clean environment, specific to an invasive procedure cannot be attained. Although a home may look clean and tidy, it is not maintained in a manner specifically for a safe invasive procedure. There are bacteria present from people and visitors who inhabit the home, and homes are often contaminated with animal hair.

Sanitary sinks. People attending the party as well as the technician wash their hands and clean up after a procedure in a common restroom where people living in the house, including children, use the area for personal grooming purposes.

What we ultimately have here is not necessarily a fun afternoon or night out with the girls. We have a potentially dangerous environment, where the low cost offered by a technician, who skirts all the professional requirements of others, is often offset by infections, diseases, poor work, and an overall uneasy feeling after the fun is over.

Is it worth it? Would you shortchange good health or your appearance to save a few hundred dollars? Do you want to encourage people to break the law and avoid the standards put on those who operate professionally, so that you might only pay X amount of dollars for your procedure? Where do you go after this person disappears from the party? Currently, in some places, people are coming into the U.S. from another country, working at home parties, and then returning to their home country without any means to easily communicate with the people involved. Where do you turn for a follow up appointment if the procedure requires correction or additional detail work? Do you think another technician you avoided going to because they charged a price commensurate with professional services and standards is going to fix you for no charge? Will the laser physician take pity on your appearance and offer multiple sessions to remove the pigment just because you chose to do business with a non-compliant person? If you do contract a disease from the home environment where your procedures took place, who is accountable? The friend who invited you? The technician who has no contact information or permanent place of business? The bottom line is that your options are few, expensive, will be embarrassing and represent one of those decisions you wish you never made.

If you desire permanent cosmetics, you can either afford good professional services or you cannot. If you can and still choose to attend a home party, or have a technician who floats from home to home for a cheaper price, you must be willing to accept the possible consequences.