



## **A Guide to Tattoos and Piercings in the Netherlands.**

In order to better inform our fellow students in Amsterdam about the risks and requirements of tattoos and piercings in the Netherlands, 020 reached out to the GGD Amsterdam, the Public Health Agency to create a brief overview on the matter.

### **Is it safe to get tattooed or pierced in the Netherlands?**

In the Netherlands it is only allowed to tattoo or pierce when you have the required permit. This permit is issued by the GGD on behalf of the Minister of Health, Welfare and Sports. This permit has to be renewed every three years. To get this permit you have to meet the Dutch guidelines for hygienic tattooing or piercing. These guidelines can be found on [www.veiligtatoeeren.nl](http://www.veiligtatoeeren.nl). Before a studio can get their permit, an inspector from the GGD visits the studio to check if everything meets the above-mentioned guidelines. During this visit, the inspector focuses on the following things:

- I. The way the studio is built and furnished
- II. If all materials, ink, needles and disinfection products meet the requirements.
- III. The artist needs to make a tattoo in front of the inspector to ensure they are capable of tattooing safely.

All the guidelines are made strictly from a hygienic point of view and do not concern the tattoo artists technical skill or the aesthetics of their tattoos.

### **The European Norm.**

There are many countries in Europe who have comprehensive guidelines regarding tattoos and piercings. The rules and regulations may vary greatly between countries, though. There are also some European countries who do not have any rules or guidelines at all. To realise a more unified approach, the EU has been busy with making regulation about tattoos. This will hopefully be accepted by all member states in the upcoming years. As of now, there are no unified rules for piercings.

### **Are piercings and tattoos in the Netherlands always safe?**

As mentioned before, every studio in the Netherlands is required to have a permit. There are not many complaints about licensed studios in the Netherlands. Unfortunately, there are a lot of at-home tattoo artists. These are people who tattoo at your own house or from theirs, without having the proper permit. They are generally a lot cheaper, which makes sense as they do not have the cost of maintaining a studio and don't have to pay to upkeep rigorous cleaning practices. Consequently, this makes the risk of infection a lot bigger. Also, the possibility of getting infected with blood-borne pathogens, such as hepatitis B, C or HIV

### **How to prepare for getting a tattoo?**

First look around on Instagram to find out which styles there are, and which style a specific studio specialises in. It is noteworthy that most unexperienced tattoo artists claim they can do all styles, but it is generally better to go to an artist who specialises in the style you want. Instagram can't guarantee,

however, that the tattoo you see was actually done by that person. Also ask around if you have friends who have tattoos. Maybe they would recommend their studio to you.

If you've decided what style and studio you want, walk into the studio before you make an appointment. See if you like the atmosphere, if the artists and employees are nice, if they give you all the necessary information and so forth.

### **COVID-19: Can I still get a tattoo or a piercing?**

Tattooing and piercing belong to the so-called "contact professions". The tattoo artist and/or piercer will ask you the same health related questions that will be asked to you in restaurants and bars: "Do you have any symptoms which could be related to COVID-19?" "Have you been in contact with someone who has COVID-19 in the past 14 days?" "Have you been in "high risk area" (code orange) in the past 14 days?" You have to make an appointment before you want to get a tattoo or a piercing. Before the outbreak of COVID-19 it was permitted to take a friend with you, however now you will have to go the studio on your own. You could be asked to wear a face mask and it is likely that the tattoo artist and/or piercer will wear one as well. These are regulations for which the studio can choose freely to abide by or not, they have as of yet not been deemed mandatory by the government. Make sure to follow the developments on this. In case of a sharp rise in COVID-19 cases there is a possibility that these regulations will become mandatory.

Good preparation before getting a tattoo can spare you a lot of regret. Tattoos are not easy to get off, so truly prepare and think about the process before getting one.

020 advises any student who has any questions or concerning regarding tattoos and piercings in Amsterdam to directly reach out to the GGD: <https://www.ggd.amsterdam.nl/english/>

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