

DATE: March 25, 2026 (revised March 31, 2026)

PRACTICE CLARIFICATION – Use of Topical Anesthesia and Nonprescription Drugs by Tattoo Artists

This practice clarification is based on language currently in statute. It does not constitute a new policy or a decision made by either the Board of Electrologists and Body Art Practitioners or the Tattoo Course of Study Review Committee.

1. Q: Is the administration of topical anesthesia to a client within the scope of practice of a licensed tattoo artist?

A: No. The administration of topical anesthesia to a client by a licensed tattoo artist is not within the scope of practice of a licensed tattoo artist. Administration of drugs to other people may constitute the practice of medicine. For additional information, contact the Oregon Medical Board.

2. Q: Can a licensed tattoo artist administer other over-the-counter nonprescription drugs to a client while performing services on a client?

A: No, the administration of drugs, whether prescription or nonprescription, to a client is not within the scope of practice of a licensed tattoo artist.

3. Q: What happens if a tattoo artist is found administering topical anesthesia or other nonprescription drugs on a client?

A: The Licensee could face sanctions from the Board of Electrologists and Body Art Practitioners, including civil penalties, suspension or revocation of the license and potential criminal charges.

4. Q: What happens if a client self-administers topical anesthesia or other over-the-counter nonprescription drugs before or after getting a tattoo?

A: The self-administration of topical anesthesia or other over-the-counter nonprescription drugs by a client is not regulated by the Board.

5. Q: Can a licensed Body Art Facility sell over-the-counter nonprescription drugs?

A: Yes, if the facility holds the appropriate license through the Board of Pharmacy.