

# Minnesota Board of Cosmetologist Examiners

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## **Rumor vs. Reality: Infection Control**

This document is intended to be used as a helpful guide, but is not considered to show formal interpretation of rule or law. If you have specific concerns about a rule or law, you may contact the BCE at [bce.board@state.mn.us](mailto:bce.board@state.mn.us) or independently consult your lawyer.

### **Disinfection**

#### **Light Box “Sanitizers”**

**Rumor:** “The proper way to clean and disinfect my metal implements is to place the tools into my light box sanitizer for 10 minutes after disinfecting.”

**Reality:** Light box “sanitizers” do not have to be used. These units often use UV light, which does not sanitize, disinfect, or sterilize metal, hard plastic, or glass. If used according to the rumor, the inspector may assume implements are not being cleaned and disinfected properly when old nail clippings or other debris are found inside the unit. Using light boxes may be deceptive, especially if used in lieu of disinfectant.

Follow these four steps to properly disinfect implements not made of porous material:

1. **Clean** with hot, soapy water, removing all visible debris from the implements.
2. **Completely submerge** implements in a properly measured, EPA registered, hospital-level/grade disinfectant for the full contact time listed on disinfectant’s product label.
3. **Rinse** implements free of disinfectant.
4. **Dry and store** implements in a clean, closed container, drawer, cabinet, cupboard, etc. Implements are best air dried under a clean towel.

#### **Disinfectants with Tuberculocidal Agents**

**Rumor:** “Minnesota Rule 2105.0380 M explains that the disinfectant used must be registered with the EPA as a tuberculocidal (TB) agent. Barbicide Plus and Marvicide II both contain TB agents. I must use Barbicide Plus or Marvicide II.”

**Reality:** According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([CDC](https://www.cdc.gov)), “TB is spread through the air...when a person with TB disease of the lungs or throat coughs, sneezes, speaks, or sings. People nearby may breathe in these bacteria and become infected.” Being that TB spreads through the air, using a disinfectant with a TB agent would not adequately decrease the risk of TB. Consequently, the TB requirement in [Minn. R. 2105.0380 M](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/2105.0380) is obsolete and under revision. Licensees do not need to use a disinfectant with a TB agent (such as Barbicide Plus or Marvicide II). Moreover, the BCE does not promote or endorse the use of any particular brand; any EPA registered, hospital-level/grade disinfectant will do.

## Measuring Disinfectant

**Rumor:** “I don’t have to measure my disinfectant...”

**Reality:** Both the disinfectant and the water must be measured to ensure infectious diseases are eliminated during the disinfecting process. According to [Minn. R. 2105.0380 M](#), “[a]ny disinfectant used...must be registered with the United States Environmental Protection Agency...and used according to the manufacturer’s instructions.” Over or under measuring potentially makes the disinfectant ineffective or could damage implements.

## Use and Storage of Tools

### Double-Dipping into Wax

**Rumor:** “I can double-dip my wax sticks because the wax gets hot enough to kill any germs that may be in there...”

**Reality:** No. In fact, if the wax in your wax pot was hot enough to kill harmful bacteria or viruses, it would surely burn your skin. Wax pots are kept at a temperature that creates an optimum environment for bacteria growth. This means that if a licensee double-dips a wax stick, any infectious disease Sally (or Billy or Mary or Tilly or any prior customers) may have had on her skin may now be in the communal wax pot, multiplying. The licensee who double-dips wax sticks in communal wax pots puts everyone who uses that wax pot at risk. Similarly, the opposite end of a used wax stick is considered used because the licensee has already touched it. As [Minn. R. 2105.0380 D](#) explains “...single-use items may be used one time only, and must be immediately disposed of...” See also [Minn. Stat. 155A.355 Subd. 1](#).

### Storing Wet Implements

**Rumor:** “Implements, including perm rods/rollers, must be put away wet so they don’t get contaminated.”

**Reality:** Storing wet or damp implements may lead to mold or product damage, making it a possible health or safety threat. Though not in rule, implements should be air dried under a clean towel before being stored in clean, closed containers.