



## Tattooing – Infection Prevention and Control

### Needle Cartridge System

#### What is a needle cartridge system?

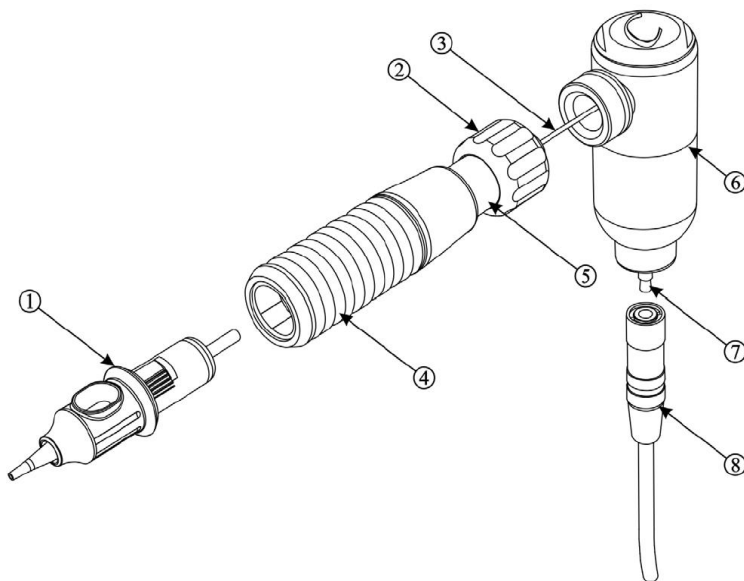
Also known as a safety cartridge, needle cartridge systems are part of tattoo machines that are used by many artists. The tattoo needle cartridges are purchased pre-packaged, sterile and are discarded after every use into an approved sharps container. This system is considered a safer alternative because the needle is contained in a cartridge with a backflow preventer until use, reducing the risk of cross-contamination and needle stick injury for the artists.

Cartridge needles systems with no backflow preventer (also known as a membrane or barrier), are not guaranteed to prevent the contamination of blood and body fluids inside the grip sleeve or the drive bar, which may contaminate the needle.



**For this reason, the grip sleeve and drive bar will be required to be sterile prior to use for any needle cartridge system with no manufacturer instructions indicating the cartridge has a backflow preventer.**

#### Example of a Needle Cartridge System:



1. Needle Cartridge
2. Fixing Nut
3. Drive Bar
4. Grip Sleeve
5. Index
6. Machine Body
7. Current Connection
8. Connecting Cable

Images from Cheyenne Hawk Manual, Version 1.4, 07/2009





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#### **How do I clean and disinfect my tattoo machine with a needle cartridge system if I use a disposable grip?**

When a disposable grip is used:

- The body of the machine must be completely covered with a disposable plastic cover
- The disposable plastic cover must be securely attached to the machine body with tape
- The plastic cover and tape must be discarded between clients

#### **How do I re-use my grip with a needle cartridge system?**

It is highly recommended regardless of the type of cartridge system used, that a re-usable grip is cleaned with soap and water and then placed into an ultrasonic cleaner before being **sterilized in an autoclave** after each client.

If an autoclave is not accessible or the manufacturer instruction prohibit this, then the cartridge system **must have manufacturer proof of having a backflow preventer to be cleaned and disinfected, instead of sterilized between uses.**

For those using a cartridge system with a backflow preventer, the grip and machine must be:

- Covered well with disposable plastic cover
- The plastic cover must be securely attached to the unit with tape
- The plastic cover and tape must be discarded between clients
- The re-usable grip and machine must be cleaned and then disinfected with a **Tuberculocidal or Mycobactericidal disinfectant after each use.**

#### **Q: What do I need to know about re-using the drive bar?**

Drive bars that can be re-used are only permitted with the use of cartridge systems **that have manufacturer proof of having a backflow preventer.** For cartridge systems with backflow preventers, the drive bar must be cleaned and then disinfected with **Tuberculocidal or Mycobactericidal disinfectant after each use.**

**For cartridge systems with no proof of backflow preventers, the drive bars will be considered single-use and must be discarded between clients.**

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