

Tattoos and piercings

Young people and the law



Tattoos

In South Australia, you must be at least **18 years old** to get a tattoo. It is a crime to tattoo someone younger than 18, even if they consent. This law applies to everyone, including tattoo artists and people using a do-it-yourself kit at home.

It is also illegal to tattoo someone knowing they are drunk or affected by drugs.

If you have received a tattoo while you were intoxicated, you can report the person who gave it to you to the police.

Did you know?

It is illegal to lie about your age, use a fake ID, or lie about having your parent or carer's permission to get a tattoo, piercing or body modification when you are under 18. It is also illegal to help someone else do this.

Piercings: under 16 years

The law about piercings depends on the **body part** being pierced and your **age**.

If you are younger than 16, you can only get a piercing if you have permission from your parent or carer (in person or in writing).

You must be 18 to get a piercing in an **intimate area**. This means your nipples, genitals, anal region, perineum or uvula.

Piercings: 16 or 17 years

If you are 16 or 17 years old, you can consent to a piercing. You do not need permission from a parent or carer.

You cannot consent to a piercing in an intimate area until you are 18.

Piercings: 18 years or older

From the age of 18, you can get any type of piercing, including in an intimate area.

Other body modifications

You must be at least **18** to undergo **body modification**. This includes earlobe stretching, branding, scarring, and tongue splitting.

It is a crime to perform a body modification procedure on someone younger than 18, even if they consent.

Giving your agreement

In South Australia, no matter how old you are, you must enter into a **written agreement** with the person who is giving you a tattoo, piercing or other body mark.

The agreement must explain the procedure and how it is to be carried out. It must also explain how to care for the affected area of your body after the procedure.

A written agreement is not needed if you are 16 years or older and getting an earlobe piercing.



Tattoos, piercings and body modifications at school or work

Your school or workplace may have specific rules or policies about tattoos, piercings and body marks. These rules may be illegal if they are unreasonable or discriminatory. If a tattoo, piercing or body modification is part of your culture or religion, for example, then it may be unlawful discrimination for a school or workplace to ban you from having it.

Workers in Australia are protected by unfair dismissal laws. If you are fired only because you have a tattoo or piercing and this has never been discussed with you or addressed in your employment contract, this may be unlawful.

If your school or workplace has taken action because you have a tattoo or piercing, **get legal advice** as soon as possible. Call the Legal Helpline for free and confidential legal advice.

Legal help for all South Australians

1300 366 424 Legal Helpline



Prefer to text?

Use our Legal Chat at lsc.sa.gov.au