

The Emergence of Personal Service Settings in Former Office/Industrial Spaces

Across Durham Region, more office and industrial spaces are being converted into personal service settings (PSS) such as salons, esthetics, tattoo, and wellness businesses. Another emerging trend is the development of personal service malls, where larger commercial or former office spaces are divided into multiple smaller suites or rooms and rented to individual personal service operators. While these locations can be attractive and affordable, spaces originally designed for office use may not meet the requirements under Ontario Regulation 136/18: Personal Service Settings.

Office/industrial spaces may lack appropriate sinks, plumbing, ventilation, lighting, cleanable surfaces, or areas for equipment cleaning and storage, and may require renovations to safely support the services being offered.

Personal service malls can present additional challenges such as sharing facilities/equipment, whether those facilities are adequate for the services they provide, who is responsible for maintaining common areas and ensuring appropriate infection prevention and control practices are in place. Sharing of a hand washing sink or reprocessing sink/area may not always be possible.

Each operator is responsible for ensuring that their service area/space meets applicable requirements.

A landlord renting or advertising a suite for personal services does not guarantee that the space meets regulatory requirements.

If you're thinking of opening or making changes to your PSS or adding services, you **must notify Durham Region Health Department at least 14 days before opening**. Early consultation with the Health Department, ideally **before signing a lease or investing in renovations**, can help identify potential issues, avoid costly modifications, and support a smooth and compliant opening.



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Common Personal Service Setting Infractions: How to Stay Compliant

Durham Region Public Health inspectors conducted routine and complaint-based inspections of personal service settings throughout 2025, including nail salons, barbershops, hair salons, tattoo studios, piercing establishments, and other personal service businesses. During these inspections, more than 1,800 infractions were identified.

The three most common infractions were:

1. Reusable equipment and tools were not properly cleaned and disinfected or sterilized before reuse.
2. Disinfectants were not prepared, used, or documented according to manufacturer instructions.
3. Single-use disposable items were not discarded after each client.

How Can You Avoid These Infractions?

1. Clean and disinfect reusable items properly.

All reusable tools and equipment must first be thoroughly cleaned with soap and water using a dedicated non-absorbent brush, then rinsed before being disinfected or sterilized, as required for the specific item.

2. Use approved disinfectants correctly.

Ensure all disinfectants have a valid Drug Identification Number (DIN) and are suitable for the equipment being disinfected. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions, including proper dilution, preparation, contact times, and record-keeping requirements.

3. Dispose of single-use items after every client.

Items that are absorbent or cannot be adequately cleaned and disinfected must be designated as single-use and discarded after each service. Examples include nail files, buffers, cotton pads, needle/needle cartridges, and similar products.

Learn More

Following proper infection prevention and control practices helps protect both clients and staff while ensuring compliance with public health requirements.

For detailed guidance on operating a personal service setting, visit:

Salon & Spas – <https://www.durham.ca/health-and-wellness/public-health-inspections-and-investigations/salons-and-spas/>

Tattoos & Piercings – <https://www.durham.ca/health-and-wellness/public-health-inspections-and-investigations/tattoos-and-piercings/>



Are Animals Permitted in Personal Service Settings?

Animals are prohibited from personal service settings to prevent the spread of infectious diseases, control allergens and maintain the premise in a sanitary condition.

Under section 9 of the Personal Service Settings Regulation 136/18, it states that the premise must be kept free from animals, including birds, aquatic species and reptiles.

Exceptions include:

- Service animals described in subsection 80.45 (4) of Ontario Regulation 191/11 (Integrated Accessibility Standards) made under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005
- Live aquatic species displayed or stored in sanitary tanks

Service animals may be identified in one of two ways:

1. The service animal is visibly identifiable (i.e. service animal vest); and/or
2. The individual has documentation from a regulated health professional confirming the need for the service animal. If visibly identifiable, documentation should not be requested.

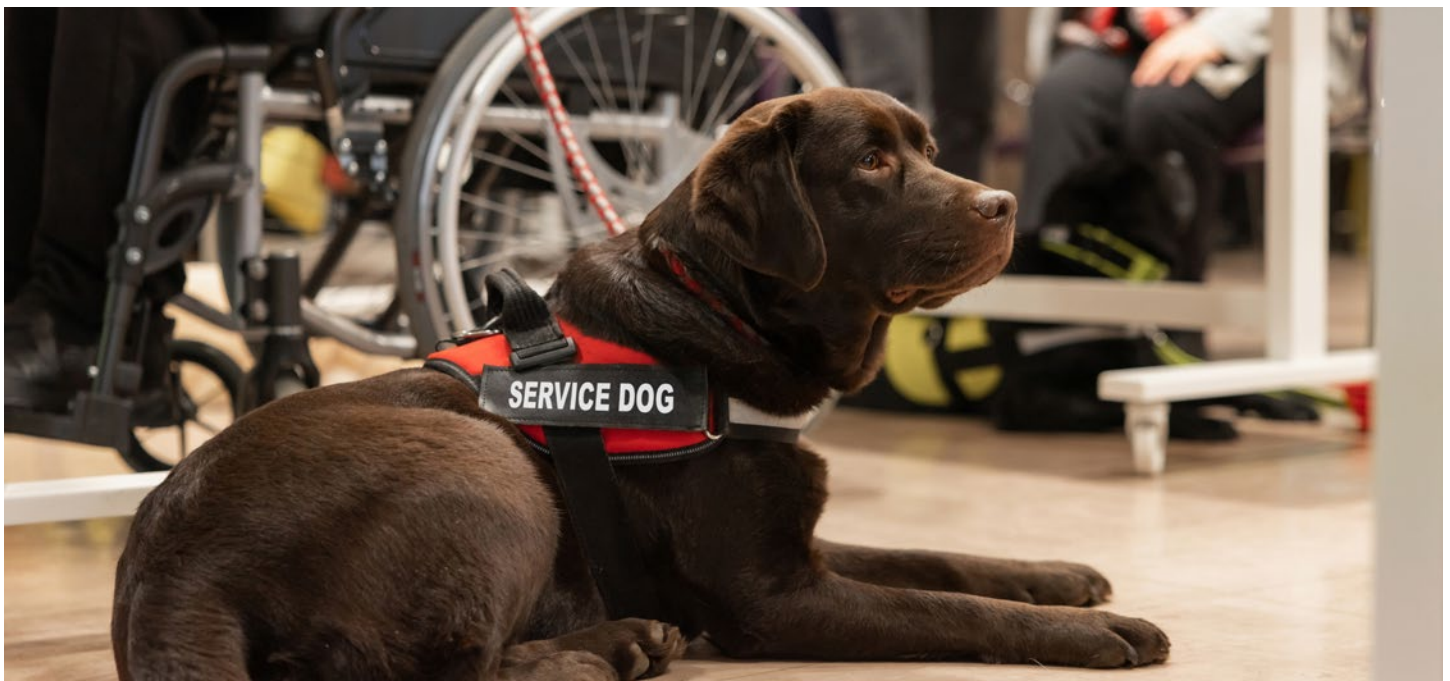
Owners/operators of a personal service setting are responsible for ensuring only service animals are permitted in the facility.

Emotional support animals are not automatically considered a service animal. Determinations should be made based on the requirements outlined in the AODA and applicable legislation.

Additional Information:

Understanding Service Animal at <https://www.aoda.ca/understanding-service-animals/>

Service Animal Laws for Ontario Workplaces at <https://www.aoda.ca/service-animal-laws-for-ontario-workplaces/>



Bleach as a Disinfectant

When selecting a bleach for the disinfection of tools/ surfaces, ensure bleach can meet **at least one of the following**:

1. The bleach must provide instructions for use as a disinfectant on the label, OR
2. The bleach has a DIN (drug identification number) present, OR
3. The label states the percentage of sodium hypochlorite (the active ingredient in bleach)

For all other bleach strengths (other than 5.25%) or calculating different volumes, use Public Health Ontario's [Chlorine Dilution Calculator](#).

Refer to [Preparing Household Bleach as a Disinfectant](#) fact sheet for measurements.

Preparing Household Bleach as a Disinfectant		
Level Required	Preparation	Contact Time
High Level Disinfection 1:50 dilution (1 part bleach : 49 parts water) or 1:10 dilution (1 part bleach : 9 parts water)	10 mL bleach + 495 mL water 2 tsp bleach + 2 cups water	20 minutes
	5 mL of bleach + 45 mL water 6 tsp bleach + 1 cup of water	10 minutes
Intermediate Level Disinfection 1:50 dilution (1 part bleach : 49 parts water)	10 mL bleach + 495 mL water 2 tsp bleach + 2 cups water	10 minutes
	Footbaths 303 mL bleach + 15 L water 404 mL bleach + 20 L water or 1 ¼ cups bleach + 4 gallons water 1 ¾ cups bleach + 5 ¼ gallons water	10 minutes
Low Level Disinfection 1:500 dilution (1 part bleach : 499 parts water)	5 mL bleach + 2.5 L water 1 tsp bleach + 10 cups water	10 minutes

Notes:

- The above dilutions are based on use of household bleach at **5.25%** sodium hypochlorite
- For all other bleach strengths (other than 5.25%) or calculating different volumes, use the Chlorine Dilution Calculator at: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/Health-Topics/Environmental-Occupational-Health/Water-Quality/Chlorine-Dilution-Calculator>
- Use a proper cleaner before disinfecting area or equipment/device
- The solution must be made fresh daily to preserve strength



Durham Health Connection Line
905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729
Dial 311 (within regional limits)
durham.ca/health

If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.

Adopted from: Guide to Infection Prevention and Control in Personal Services Settings, Public Health Ontario, July 2019.

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Behind the Inspection: The Role of Public Health Inspectors

You've likely met us; but who are we?

Across Canada, Public Health Inspectors (PHIs) or Environmental Health Officers play an important role in preventing the spread of infection and promoting safe, sanitary environments throughout the communities. When a PHI visits your salon, spa, or other personal service setting (PSS), their goal is to help protect the health of both clients and service providers.

PHIs are equipped with specialized education and practical training to assume a pertinent role in public health. Following post-secondary education at an accredited public health program, the PHI's journey starts with the completion of a supervised practicum with a Board of Health, and then the successful passing of the national Board of Certification examination hosted by the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors (CIPHI). With the achievement of the Certificate in Public Health Inspection (Canada) designation, a PHI will use their knowledge and skills to assess health risks, interpret legislation, conduct inspections and investigations, and work with operators to address public health concerns and maintain safe conditions.

At Durham Region Health Department, our team of PHIs work closely with business owners and operators to provide guidance to safely operate a PSS. PHIs will conduct routine inspections, respond to complaints, investigate potential health hazards, and provide guidance to help personal service businesses meet the requirements under the [Health Protection and Promotion Act](#), [Ontario Regulation 136/18](#), and the Ontario Public Health Standards. Using the [Infection Prevention and Control in Personal Service Settings Guidance](#), PHIs provide an abundance of knowledge to support PSS operators in decision-making.

We recognize the dedication and effort it takes to operate a personal service business, and we are here to support you. Let's continue to work together in protecting the health of your clients and your personal service workers!



A reminder: all Durham Region Health Department Public Health Inspectors carry a badge and Regional photo identification. If you don't recognize an inspector, ask to see it — and if you're still unsure, call the Durham Health Connection Line 905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729 to confirm.

Notification to Health Department: New Business, New Services or Construction/Alterations?

If you're planning to open a new personal service setting, introduce new services, or make any construction or alterations, you are required to notify the Health Department in writing at least 14 days in advance. Your notification should include:

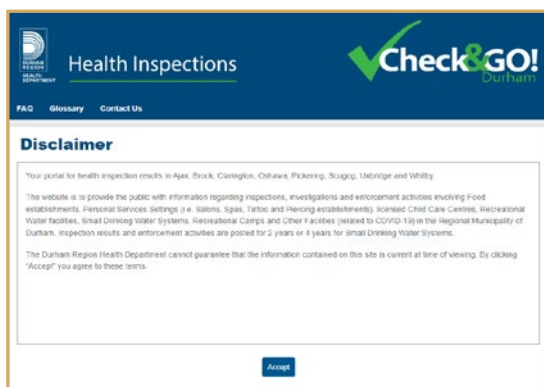
- The intended opening or reopening date
- Details of all new services being offered
- The name and address of the business
- The name and contact information of the owner/operator

To notify the Health Department please visit:

[Personal Service Settings Notification Form](#)



**Your facility's inspection
reports for the past 2 years
can be found [here](#).**



**Next Issue release:
Spring/Summer 2027
We welcome
your ideas and
suggestions!**

We would like to remind all personal service setting owner/operators and staff that we welcome any suggestions for future article topics, ideas, and any comments you have, to improve the newsletter!

Please submit comments by email to EHL@durham.ca and indicate in the subject line "Personal Service Setting Newsletter Contribution".

The *Beyond Glam* Newsletter is published and distributed by Durham Region Health Department, Health Protection Division, and is distributed to personal service settings within Durham Region.

For any additional questions, please contact your area Public Health Inspector or the Durham Health Connection Line.

Contact Us



Durham Region Health Department, Health Protection Division

101 Consumers Drive, Whitby, Ontario L1N 1C4

Dial 311 (within regional limits)

Telephone: 905-668-2020 | Toll-Free: 1-800-841-2729 | Fax: 905-666-1887

Email: EHL@durham.ca



Thank You, Durham Region Health Department