

# SAFETY IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY



## HAIRDRESSING, BARBERS AND MOBILE HAIRDRESSING

As a proprietor of a business it is YOUR responsibility to ensure that measures are in place to safeguard the health and safety of your employees, customers and anyone else who may be affected as a result of the business undertaking.

### ADVICE TO SALON PROFESSIONALS

The following information is intended to help raise awareness of the main health and safety issues affecting those employed in the hairdressing/beauty salon sector. It provides guidance on keeping risks to customers and employees as low as possible.

#### Avoiding the transmission of infection

**NB. Hairdressing is not considered high risk for transmission of serious infection.** However there is still a possibility from use of the following -

- **Scissors:** If the skin is cut, scissors should not be used again until sterilised/ disinfected.
- **Clippers:** As with scissors, if the skin is cut the blades must be removed and sterilised before further use. The risk of injury is significantly reduced if the clipper blades are properly adjusted and aligned.
- **Razors:** The use of razors in hairdressing is not recommended. However if used, special precautions must be taken to ensure their safe storage and disposal. Only single use, disposable blades should be used. Used blades and other sharp objects must be placed in a 'Sharps' box or secure container with a screw top. Disposal of the container should be by special arrangement with a waste contractor.
- **Towels and gowns:** Towels should be used once and then laundered. Protective gowns should be regularly laundered. If used on customers with cuts, bites, spots or weeping rashes in the neck area, they must be laundered before further use.

**In the rare event that a client or employee is cut, scratched or grazed, care must be taken to ensure that blood from the wound does not come into contact with instruments or other people.**

- **Wear disposable gloves.** Dab the wound with a pre-packed spirit swab and then leave to dry.
- Discard any used swabs and gloves immediately in a plastic refuse sack. All refuse sacks should be securely sealed or tied before disposal in your ordinary refuse collection system.

**More advice overleaf →**

## Methods of sterilisation and disinfection

- **Autoclaves** – These are highly recommended for equipment sterilisation. The correct temperature and pressure must be applied for an appropriate length of time in order to ensure sterilisation. This varies from 15 minutes at 121°C, to 3 minutes at 134°C.
- **Disinfectants** – Bleach or 'Milton' solution can be used for soaking combs, brushes and on non-metal surfaces. The following proportions are recommended: 1 part concentrated bleach to 100 parts water or 1 part Milton to 10 parts water. Instruments should be soaked for at least 30 mins and rinsed with clean water. Ammonia compound disinfectants (e.g. 'Babicide') can be used for metal and plastic items. Follow manufacturers instructions for correct use.



## General Hygiene Tips

- Having a duplicate set of tools means that one set can be cleansed while the other is in use.
- All contaminated articles should be carefully disposed of. Swabs and hair should be placed in refuse bags and sealed.
- All fixtures and fittings should be wiped down regularly with appropriate disinfectant products.
- Hairdressers whose hands are affected by conditions such as weeping eczema or other open skin problems should wear disposable gloves while attending to clients.

## Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) 2002

- Certain hair treatment products, such as bleach or perming solutions, contain chemicals which can be hazardous to health if they are not handled and used correctly. The above regulations apply to all businesses using such chemicals. They set out a series of simple steps which must be taken to ensure safe use and storage of hazardous substances.
- A leaflet entitled 'COSHH – A brief guide to the regulations' has been produced by the Health and Safety Executive to assist employers in understanding their responsibilities under these regulations. For a free copy of the leaflet contact Environmental Health Services (details below).
- Basic precautions should include; making all such chemicals inaccessible to customers and children. (E.g. keep in a locked cupboard); wearing disposable gloves when using chemicals (NB. An alternative to latex gloves should be provided where an employees is allergic to latex).

## Safe use of electrical equipment

- All electrical equipment must be well maintained and used in a safe manner to prevent the risk of injury from electric shock. Maintenance should include visual checks for wear and tear (e.g. exposed wiring) as well as periodical inspection and testing by a competent person ('PAT' testing). Faulty equipment should not be used until examined/repaired by a competent person.
- A free HSE leaflet entitled 'Electrical safety and you' is available from Environmental Health Services and gives further information and guidance on working safely with electrical appliances.

**For further advice on salon safety issues or any other aspect of health and safety, you can contact the Health and Safety section of Environmental Health Services on (0113) 24-77791 or [env.health@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:env.health@leeds.gov.uk)**