

HEALTH AND SAFETY IN HAIRDRESSING



Employer's Guide

If you have any questions about this leaflet call
023 8068 8358

Introduction



This guide has been produced for employers of hairdressers and is intended to give advice on some common areas of health and safety problems in the industry. It gives brief guidance on some of the problems.



The guide is to help you gain a general awareness of hairdressing employer's responsibilities under Health and Safety at work Act 1974. You work through them all and take the necessary action; it will assist you to meet some of your legal duties under health and safety law.

Steps To Take



1. Read this Employer's Guide
2. Talk to your staff about health and safety issues raised and discuss the controls already in place.



3. Complete risk assessments for these area, decide if there are other better controls available and implement them.



4. Set up procedures to check all staff are following your systems.



5. Update your risk assessments with any changes (i.e. new equipment, different technique, change in treatment/hair products etc.) in your business, and check and review them on a regular basis eg. once a year.



Health and Safety Law

Q. Who is responsible for staff and customer safety?

A. As the employer, you have a duty to ensure staff and customer safety.

Q. I have 'Employers Liability Insurance' therefore do I need to do other things in this leaflet?

A. The duties in this leaflet are concerned with criminal law, for which there is a potential for custodial sentences. Your insurance may not cover these.

Q. If an accident occurs, what can I do to defend myself?

A. We all know that accidents can happen.

Health and safety law is about preventing avoidable accidents. The best defence is to follow the advice in this leaflet and have clear policies and risk assessments

Q. What is a risk assessment?

A. This is a careful examination of what in your work, could cause harm to people, so you can consider appropriate safety precautions.

Q. Do my policies and assessments have to be written?

A. Not if you employ less than 5 staff. However, if you do document them then it will help you focus your mind. They could also prove useful in an accident investigation.

Q. Do I have to produce these policies and assessments on my own?

A. You should always involve staff in this process as they can have valuable insight. You also have a legal duty to consult them on safety.

Contact Eastleigh Borough Council Environmental Health Service for advice on any of these issues.

Q. I don't have time to do all this. As long as no accidents happen, am I OK?

A. No. An Environmental Health Officer undertakes routine inspections. Failure to fulfil your duties could result in further action being taken even if no accidents occur.

Slips, Trips and Falls

Q. What can cause slips, trips or falls in a hair salon?

A. Slips, trips and falls covering, internal or external steps and trailing flexes can be common causes. In salons you also have the added hazard of cut hair and water on the floor.

Q. Why do I need to assess slips, trips, and falls?

A. Slips, trips and falls account for the biggest proportion of accidents and injuries to people within the workplace.

Q. I can't stop hair getting on the floor, so what can I do?

A. You should clear up the cut hair as soon as possible, preferably before a customer gets up from the chair as they could slip on the own hair.

Q. What about wet days?

A. You should ensure that you have mats in doorways or mop the floor regularly to stop it getting slippery. Make sure mats are not a trip hazard themselves.

Electrical Safety

Q. I'm worried about electrical safety in my salon. What should I do?

A. Around 1000 accidents and 30 deaths a year occur in the workplace as a result of electrical shock. There are some very easy precautions to take to reduce the risk of electric shock

- Always choose equipment suitable for the working environment.
- Ensure a competent electrician maintains the equipment in a safe manner, on a regular basis. Where possible ensure RCD's are fitted or in use.
- For portable equipment use socket outlets that are close by so equipment can be easily disconnected in an emergency.
- The ends of cables should always have the outer sheath firmly clamped to stop the wires pulling off terminals.
- Always have damaged cables completely replaced, do not use insulating tape or strip connector blocks.

Q. I don't have enough sockets in my salon can I use extension cables or adaptors?

A. This is not a good idea. These can become trip hazards and you could overload the system. They can also be dangerous in wet conditions. You should get more electric sockets installed by a competent electrician

Q. What checks should be carried out on my existing equipment?

A. That will depend on the equipment. Some larger items (eg freestanding large hair dryers) may need servicing by a competent person each year. For most small items such as hand held dryers, visual inspections must be carried out every day before use. Formal inspections and in some cases testing should be carried out periodically (between 3 and 6 months).

Q. What should be look for during the daily inspection?

A. Again it's simple things.

- The cable should be free from cuts (apart from light scuffing) or crushed areas.
- The plug should not be cracked nor pins bent.
- You should not be able to see the coloured wires protruding out of the plug.
- There should be no obvious damage to the equipment casing eg cracks, etc. which expose internal wires or metal terminals.
- There should be no obvious sign of overheating eg burn marks on the plug or equipment.

These checks are very important in your working environment where you may have wet hands or there is water about.

Q. What should I look for when doing the formal inspections and testing?

A. Every 6 to 12 months you as an employer should check that for each 3-pin plug:

- there is a fuse in the plug, not a piece of wire or a nail, and it's correct fuse for the appliance.

For other than moulded plugs you should remove the cover and check that:

- the wires, including the earth are attached to the correct terminals;
- terminal screws are tight; and
- there is not internal sign of overheating etc.

Every 1 to 2 years for any equipment that has an earth wire, a competent person (which is likely to be an electrician) should carry out further testing.

It is good practice to keep a written record of all portable electrical equipment used on the premises and the checks that have been carried out on them. Every 5 years it is a good idea to get the electrical installation of the premises checked.

Q. What if staff bring in their own electrical equipment?

A. The same requirements apply to this equipment as any provided by the employer. It should be inspected prior to use in the workplace and a record kept of its use.

COSHH & Dermatitis

Q. What is COSHH?

A. This stands for the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002. They are a set of regulation designed to eliminate expose of people to dangerous substances.

Q. One of my products has a hazard symbol what should I do?

A. You should try finding an alternative product that does the same job that does not have such a



symbol

Q. Can I get more information on COSHH?

A. Leaflets are available from Eastleigh Borough Council Environmental Health or HSE books (contact details are at the end of this leaflet). There is also a website that will guide you through the process -

www.coshh-essential.org.uk

Q. I cannot replace the product so what next?

A. You must do a risk assessment on what products.

Firstly you need to know all the details of the product, ask you suppliers for a 'hazard data sheet'. This will indicate what safety precautions are needed to use that product safely. You should implement these precautions and also make your staff aware of these

Q. I've used these products for years with no adverse effects, why should I do all this?

A. Some hairdresser's products have historically been the cause of occupational dermatitis. This can be a quick reaction to the product, or in some cases they can become sensitised over a period of time. You have to ensure the safety of staff and customers.

Q. Do I have to do anything else about dermatitis?

A. You have a duty to monitor staff health to prevent dermatitis. This does not mean being a doctor, but making regular, simple visual checks and if problems are seen take precautions.

Q. What are the symptoms of dermatitis?

A. Initial signs can be redness, itching, scaling and blistering. As it gets worse the skin can crack and bleed and the dermatitis can spread all over the body. If spotted early and adequate precautions care taken most people recover. Some people will be affected for life; so don't take risks always wear gloves when the hazard data sheet or manufacturer of a product recommends them.

Q. What type of precautions should we take?

A. This can include a number of measures, it could be that a member of staff stops using a particular product, or a less hazardous product is used, or uses protective gloves, even though that is not the normal routine e.g. when shampooing. These are both ways by which exposure to the problem product is reduced.

Q. The instructions on my dyes or hair colorants say we should use gloves. Are all gloves suitable?

A. No. Gloves must be chosen that have the correct protection qualities needed. Often hair preparations come with plastic gloves but some people find them cumbersome to use. While latex gloves are widely available and are often used, you should be aware that some people are allergic to them. Hazard data sheet of the product might advise of the gloves to be worn.

Q. Can I get staff to buy their own gloves?

A. No. If gloves are needed it is your duty to supply these. You also need to ensure that staff are wearing them, can use them safely, if a member of staff is allergic to latex you must offer an alternative eg. Nitrile.

Q. I do skin tests on my customers before dyeing or perming their hair. Should I record these test results?

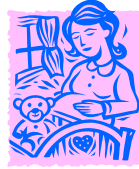
A. Whilst there are no legal requirements to record these tests, think how you would prove you had done them should anyone ever make a complaint against you.

Q. Some customers won't have a skin test, but I get them to sign a disclaimer. Is that OK?

A. As a professional person you should not undertake an action, which you know, could injure someone. No one can give someone permission to injure them. A disclaimer may offer little protection in this case.

Transmission of Infection

One area of concern appropriate to Hairdressers is that of the potential for the transmission of infections, for instance Hepatitis B and HIV. The risk of these infections being transmitted through the hairdressing trade is minimal, however suitable precautions require to be taken to eliminate as far as possible the potential for such a risk to occur



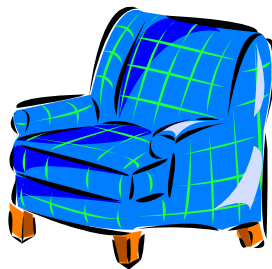
NEW & EXPECTANT MOTHERS & YOUNG PERSONS

Q. I have heard that there are special requirements for expectant mothers. What are they?

A. You should be given written notification when one of your employees is pregnant. You must then carry out a risk assessment on that individual into any risk that there may be to the health and safety of the worker or baby.

This could include risk from the physical demands of the work eg. having to stand for long periods, any lifting that has to be done etc. It should also include any specific risk from any chemicals used (see COSHH)

You will also need to ensure you provide suitable rest facilities.



Q. Are there any special requirements for other workers?

A. Yes, for any young worker (defined as someone under 18 years of age) you should have assessments that take into account:

- Their inexperience, lack of awareness of risk and immaturity
- The furnishings and layout of the workplace and the workstation.
- The nature, degree and duration of exposure to physical, biological and chemical agents.
- The form, range and use of work equipment and the way in which it is handles.
- The organisation of processes and activities; and
- The extent of the health and safety training provided to the person.

ACCIDENT REPORTING



Q. Do I have to keep records of all accidents even if no injury occurs?

A. Ideally you should. This helps you identify areas where accidents are happening more often than you realise. This allows you to introduce measures that can reduce the number of injuries that occur.

Q. Do I need to tell anyone when an accident has occurred?

A. Yes under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 1995 you have to report accidents to HSE where specific injuries have resulted.

Q. What accidents need reporting?

A. There is a list of injuries that should be reported in your industry the most common types are any injuries, which keeps an employee off work for more than 3 days or where a member of the public is taken directly to hospital as a result of an accident. More advice can be found in the booklet RIDDOR Explained, but if you are unsure then report the incident or contact Eastleigh Borough Council Environmental Health for advice.

Q. Is it just accidents that I need to report?

A. No. Occupational Dermatitis is a reportable disease in the hair dressing industry. If you receive a written diagnosis from a Doctor that one of your employees is suffering from this to: HSE. The ICC - 0845 300 9923 - Fax No. 0845 300 9924

BYE LAWS

Q. I've heard that some authorities have specific byelaws for hairdressers, does Eastleigh?

A. There are specific byelaws for hairdressing and other work activities such as ear piercing, electrolysis and micro pigmentation.

If any of these practices are carried out in your salon, then the premises and each operative must be registered with Eastleigh Borough Council Environmental Health. Please contact us on 023 8068 8358 if you need more advice in this area.



NAIL SALONS AND NAIL BARS HEALTH AND SAFETY ADVICE



These substances may be toxic through skin contact, ingestion or inhalation, often by all three routes.

REMEMBER:

1. Always use the correct product; cheap alternatives may be more harmful.
2. Know your responsibilities under **COSHH** - use chemicals safely and with the correct protective equipment.
3. Be aware that sensitisation can occur - talk to your employer if you think you may have an allergy (dermal or respiratory)
4. Ensure there is adequate ventilation whilst you are working
5. Adopt good working practices:
 - Dispenser bottles are kept closed. Also that you use only dispenser bottles that have small openings.
 - Gauze pads, cotton wool etc that has been soaked in chemical should be disposed of in a sealed bag
 - Rubbish should be disposed of in a sealed bag
 - Rubbish should be removed and bin liners should be replaced daily
 - Only decant the amount of liquid into dispenser bottles that is needed for the days work
 - Wear glove to protect against acrylic dust when removing nails
 - Regularly wash hands, arms and face with soap and water to remove acrylic dust, especially before eating
 - Do not eat and drink in the salon
 - Do not smoke in the salon
 - Sterilise stainless steel equipment (clippers, files etc) between clients OR use new disposable products for each client