

Nail Salons



Health & Safety and
Best Practice Advice
For Nail Technicians
and Salon Owners



Acrylic Nail extensions are becoming increasingly common, and nail salons or nail bars are turning up everywhere. More and more Nail Technicians are starting up every day. The purpose of this booklet is to help ensure that nail extensions are carried out in a safe and hygienic way.

main hazards

1.

chemical

Many of the chemicals used within the Nail Salon are safe to use, others require more caution and controls to be used safely. The only way to make sure that you are using your chemicals safely is to be well informed about the products you're using and to follow any safety instructions.

As a first step you should contact your chemical suppliers and ask for the Chemical Data Sheets for the chemicals that you use (also known as Material Safety Data Sheets or MSDS). These sheets contain information on what safety precautions need to be

taken when using the chemicals, any special measures you may need to take if the product were to be spilled and any specific storage and fire fighting instructions.

These data sheets can help you when carrying out an assessment of risks from the use of chemicals in your business under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002.



As you may well be aware, the television and newspapers has focused heavily on a chemical called Methyl Methacrylate (**MMA**). This chemical has been banned in parts of the United States and in London, where there are strict licensing laws, the chemical cannot be used for the premise to be licensed. MMA

has been linked to skin irritation, and may cause asthma. A safer alternative is Ethyl Methacrylate (EMA) and although this is not hazard free and still needs to be used carefully, it is a safer chemical to use.

In general, you should ensure, particularly with flammable substances like acetone that you only have the minimum amount on site at any one time and that these chemicals should be stored appropriately (e.g. in a lockable metal cabinet).

Follow the manufacturers instructions carefully. Some chemicals require greater protection than others.

Chemicals such as EMA have a particularly strong odour. While the chemical can be detected as a strong smell before harmful levels are reached, some chemicals can cause sensitisation on repeated exposure. Wearing masks is rarely a protective measure as many of the masks will not properly filter the chemicals, and your customers will continue to be exposed to potentially hazardous chemicals.

There are a number of ways to reduce the amount of chemicals released into the air:

- Use alternatives to hazardous chemicals which are safer to use.
- Use metal rubbish bins with foot operated lids. This will reduce the amount of harmful chemicals released into the air. The bins should be emptied daily.



- When using any chemicals ensure that if they are decanted that they are put into the smallest possible vessel.



For instance,

when using EMA, use a small thimble-sized container with a narrow opening rather than a tea cup or other large container. This will ensure that the minimum amount of chemicals are

released into the air and makes the area easier to ventilate and in turn can protect the nail technician and client.

- Keep chemicals in closed containers until needed and ensure that all containers are marked.
- Use the smallest possible brushes to apply the monomer.

Some vapour release is unavoidable so ideally you should use ventilated treatment tables which vent to the outside. These can reduce the exposure to

harmful dust and chemicals.

Ventilated tables will be fitted with filters which will need replacing

according to the manufacturers instructions to ensure that they remain effective.



In addition, the ventilation of the salon in general should be adequate. General ventilation is best if you have a through flow from front to back of the premises.

Nail powders can also cause irritation to the nose and throat. Reactions to these chemicals can vary but include nausea, headaches and respiratory problems including asthma. All the above control measures will help to protect you and your clients from these effects.

Many of the UV gel systems are almost vapour free, but there is a hazard presented by the use of UV lights. It is important that the client's nails be properly exposed to the light or the acrylic nails will not fix properly and potentially allow fungal infections to develop. The UV lights should be changed every 6 months (or in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions).

Nail technicians can suffer from skin disorders for various reasons. Constant hand washing or reaction to chemical handling can break down the skin's natural barriers. Dermatitis is a skin inflammation

caused by exposure to irritants or solvents and is a very common skin disorder within the beauty industry. Obviously you should try to avoid as much direct exposure to chemicals and nail dust as much as possible and in particular:

- wear protective gloves and change these after each client (preferably cotton lined or plastic disposable – nitrile gloves produce fewer allergic reactions than latex) Barrier creams are not effective.
- avoid direct contact with products that contain known sensitisers such as nail polishes, acrylic liquids or removers containing solvents
- moisturise hands regularly
- wash skin with a pH neutral soap after skin contact with chemicals and then moisturise

2. biological

There are a number of diseases of the nail and skin which you may encounter. You should have been made aware

of what conditions to look for as part of your training. A clean, tidy workplace is essential for good health



and safety. A dirty workplace can result in slips and falls which may cause injury. More importantly, it can also contribute to infection by providing an unhygienic environment where bacteria can thrive.

Controls

- Prohibit smoking, eating and drinking in the salon.

- Treat the natural nail and cuticle carefully to avoid infection.

Ensure that staff are suitably trained for the work they are carrying



out, for instance the NVQ/SVQ level 3 or Diploma in Nail Services, or Advanced Nail Techniques. A general Beauty Therapy qualification may also be suitable as long as the topics covered include safe working practices with regards to nails. Product placement or basic trade courses are rarely a substitute for proper training.

- Record a relevant history for each client. It is important to ask the right questions before starting work to ensure that there is a reduced risk of cross contamination. For instance:

Has the client had a history of any skin conditions such as dermatitis or eczema?
Has the client got a history of allergies?
Is the client currently undergoing chemotherapy or radiation treatment?
Are the client's nails and skin in good condition?
Is the client pregnant? (Pregnant clients and workers may be at greater risk from chemicals used in applying acrylic nails).
Does the client have an existing medical condition, e.g. infection, blood disease, heart disease?

- The above list is not exhaustive and the questions which you need to ask may vary depending on the types of chemicals used and the procedures carried out. However, it is an essential stage of the process. It may be tempting to simply serve the client without checking, but if cross-contamination occurred the results could be costly. Bad publicity and the lack of repeat business could be devastating. If a client is unsuitable for treatment then they should NOT be treated! If in doubt, you should

advise the client to seek an expert medical opinion before commencing work.

- Any equipment used which comes into direct contact with the nail or skin should be single use and disposable or specific to the client. This would include any nail files, boards, etc.
- Equipment such as nail clippers should be effectively cleaned/sanitized between clients using for instance barbicide.
- You should ensure that both the nail technician and the client thoroughly wash their hands and use hand sanitizers prior to treatment.



- The treatment table should be cleaned between uses. Follow the manufacturers advice on the proper cleaning of the table. Ensure any towels that are used are replaced between clients.
- Avoid the use of nail drills. They can increase the risk of infection and can cause damage to the clients natural nails. The use of EMA instead of MMA can reduce the likelihood of needing to use a drill. Where a drill has to be used, only trained technicians should be allowed to use this equipment and any parts of the drill which come into contact with skin or natural nail should be single use or sterilised between clients.
- treat all body substances as potentially infectious – always wear gloves
- Many members of the public are not aware that the acrylic nails require maintenance after application. Fungal infections can also occur if artificial nails are left on too long – more than three months. Moisture accumulates under the nail creating a perfect environment for bugs to grow. Ensure that the client is given aftercare

advice, ideally in the form of a written aftercare advice leaflet.

- Ensure that floors are regularly cleaned to ensure that they are free from nail dust and clippings
- You should always wash hands before and after working, going to the toilet, eating, drinking and smoking.
- You should wash and sanitize your hands and the client's hands before starting on the client.

Nail technicians need to be aware that their own artificial nails may transfer infection to clients and clients may transfer infection to the technician. Dermatologists also warn that excessive filing and buffing can cause nail trauma and also put the recipient at greater risk of bacterial or yeast infections. This is particularly true with the use of nail drills.

Bumps to nails and even over-zealous filing or buffing can tear the skin and allow dirt and germs to enter. Remember never cut the cuticle. If the nail is

re-glued without proper cleaning, bacteria and fungi may grow in between nails and spread to the natural nail. Remember to clean the nail with before applying the new nail.

3. physical

Maintaining the physical environment of the salon is important as slips and trips as well as musculo-skeletal disorders from poor posture continue to be one of the most common forms of work related accidents and illness. Many nail technicians experience problems with upper body injuries caused by having to maintain awkward postures of the upper body and limbs while performing highly repetitive tasks.

To minimise potential injury, you should:

- vary tasks as much as possible to allow recovery time for muscles



- use height-adjustable chairs with good back support to ensure that your head is not constantly bent too far forward as you work
- ensure that work stations are at the right height for the relevant tasks, such as manicure tables at the right height and reception desks at a comfortable standing height,
- manage appointments to rotate the lengthy, demanding tasks if possible
- store all objects between knee and shoulder height
- avoid swivelling your body while working and try to move your feet in the same direction as you are turning, and

- do finger stretching exercises and rotation of wrists, shoulders and neck.
- immediately clean up any spilt oil, chemicals, water, etc
- remove rubbish including boxes, or obstacles regularly from walkways to prevent trip hazards
- ensure that trailing cables are secured properly, either by fixing to the wall or by ensuring that cable tidies and trip guards are used.



This is not an exhaustive list, but by following the advice in this leaflet you will be helping to ensure a safe and health business for staff and clients.

If you would like further information please contact the Public Health and Safety Team using the details below.

Neighbourhood and Housing Services

Public Health and Safety Team

PO Box 595

4th Floor

Brunel House

St Georges Road

Bristol

BS99 2AW

Telephone (0117) 9222144

Fax (0117 9224711)

Email: health_safety@bristol-city.gov.uk

www.bristol-city.gov.uk/publichealthandsafety

With Thanks to Heidi Kellerman and all the staff at Nail Xpression for their kind help and assistance in allowing us to take photos for this leaflet.

Notes:

TRANSLATIONS

If English is not your first language and you need a translation, we can get one for you.

BENGALI

ইংরেজী আপনার মাতৃভাষা না হলে এবং আপনার কোন অনুবাদের প্রয়োজন হলে আমরা তা প্রদান করতে সক্ষম।

CANTONESE

如果英文不是您的第一語言，而您需要翻譯的話，我們可以為您安排。

FARSI

اگر انگلیسی زبان اول شما نیست و شما مترجم لازم دارید ما می توانیم برای شما فراهم کنیم

GUJARATI

જો તમારી પહેલી ભાષા અંગ્રેજી ન હોય અને તમને ભાષાંતરની જરૂર હોય તો અમે તમને તે આપી શકીએ છીએ.

HINDI

यदि आंग्रेजी आप की पहली भाषा नहीं है और आप को अनुवाद की आवश्यकता है तो यह हम आप को प्रदान कर सकते हैं।

KOSOVAN

Nëse anglishtja nuk është gjuha juaj amtare dhe keni nevojë për një përkthim, ne mund t'ua sigurojmë atë.

KURDISH

Heke îngilizî zimanê we yê yekem nîne û pêwîstiya we bi wergêr heye, em dikarin yekî ji we re bibînin

PUNJABI

ਜੇਕਰ ਇੰਗਲਿਸ਼ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਅਤੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਬਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਰੂਰਤ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਲਈ ਅਸੀਂ ਇਸਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ।

PUSHTO

که انگلیسی لومړنۍ ژبه نه وي او ژباړې ته اړتیا لری، مونږ ئې درته پیدا کولای شو

SOMALI

Haddii Ingiriisku aanu ahayn atkaaga kowaad oo aad u baahan tahay turjumaad, annagaa kuu samayn karra.

URDU

اگر انگریزی آپ کی پہلی زبان نہیں ہے اور آپ کو ترجمہ کی ضرورت ہے تو ہم آپ کے لئے فراہم کر سکتے ہیں۔

VIETNAMESE

Nếu quý vị không thạo Anh văn và cần bản dịch, chúng tôi sẽ giúp quý vị một bản.

If you would like this information in a different format, for example, Braille, audio tape, large print or computer disc please contact the Public Health and Safety Team



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