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# Health and safety in the beauty industry

## Foreword

Health and safety can be seen as bureaucratic, red tape, confusing, or technical. The purpose of this book is, hopefully, to change minds! The first part deals with legal requirements in straightforward language without reference to legal duties, and the second part gets a bit more technical. By following the guidance in part 1, you should be complying with the law. Part 2 is there to justify the reasoning behind part 1 for those who are interested in the law and more technical matters.

This is not a comprehensive guide to health and safety law, however it does focus on matters of most concern in the beauty industry, those topics which give rise to the most serious risks or common accidents.

If you want additional advice do not hesitate to contact your health and safety enforcement team who will be pleased to advise you. It is more important to us that we help you run your business free from accidents and ill health than have to advise you how to put things right after they have gone wrong.

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# Contents

## Part 1: plain advice

1.1 Health and safety law	5
1.2 Insurance	8
1.3 Safety policies and risk assessment	9
1.4 Accident reporting	11
1.5 Dermatitis	13
1.6 Asthma	14
1.7 Chemicals and Product Safety	15
1.8 Good Practice	16
1.9 No naked flames	18
1.10 Slips, trips and falls	19
1.11 Musculoskeletal disorders: aches and pains	20
1.12 Asbestos	21
1.13 Electricity	23
1.14 Gas	25
1.15 Sun beds	26
1.16 Fish pedicures	27
1.17 Spray tanning	28

## **Part 2: The Technical Section (optional)**

2.1 Health and safety law	29
2.2 Insurance	32
2.3 Safety policies and risk assessment	33
2.4 Accident reporting	35
2.5 Dermatitis	36
2.6 Asthma	37
2.7 Chemicals and Product Safety	39
2.8 Good Practice	41
2.9 No naked flames	43
2.10 Slips, trips and falls	45
2.11 Musculoskeletal disorders: aches and pains	46
2.12 Asbestos	47
2.13 Electricity	48
2.14 Gas	50
2.15 Sun beds	52
2.16 Fish pedicures	55
2.17 Spray tanning	56

## 1.1 Health and safety law

Health and safety law can seem very complex, but if you remember the basic principle of the legal requirements then you can't go wrong. That principle is:

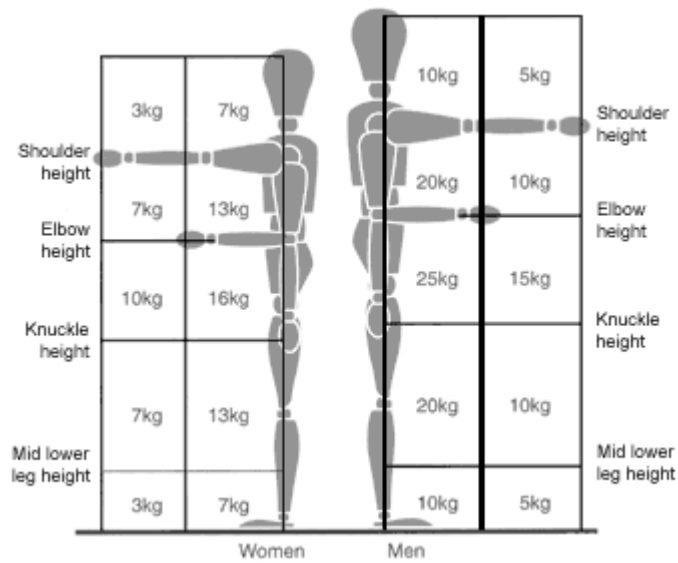
'everyone has the right to go to work fit and healthy and return home fit and healthy to enjoy their own time.'

So, as an employer, your duty is to make sure your employees are not harmed by the workplace or any workplace activities. This includes physical harm from:

Standing up too long or adopting awkward postures



## Carrying things that are too heavy



## Falling or slipping causing injuries



You must also consider harm from chemicals used at work and in the beauty industry that can be a very large number of products. While all products must be safe to use on clients, this does not necessarily make them safe for use at work because people who work with them

are exposed for much longer times whereas the client normally only has a very short exposure.

Employees have a duty to follow health and safety instructions from the employer and use personal protective equipment as instructed.

As well as duties to staff, the employer also has a duty to protect and care for customers.

We haven't mentioned any laws or regulations yet, but if you are interested there is a more comprehensive review in part 2.

## 1.2 Insurance



It is a legal requirement to provide Employers' Compulsory Liability Insurance in case any of your employees are injured at work and you have been negligent such that you have to pay compensation. All businesses have to purchase this.

An additional add-on is Public Liability Insurance which can be provided by your insurance company. Usually the two policies are available in a package which can be cheaper than purchasing the two separately.





### 1.3 Safety policies and risk assessment



Safety policies are a written statement by the employer indicating their commitment to health and safety and the organisation to achieve compliance. The writing of the statement is an indication that the employer has considered legal requirements. However, a safety policy is not required if you have less than five employees. This is because the organisation is so small that verbal communication between staff is sufficient. Larger organisations, being more complex, require the additional effort.

A policy template is available on line or at appendix 1.



Similarly with risk assessment: these only need to be in writing when there are five or more employees – unless the risks are particularly significant (really dangerous!).

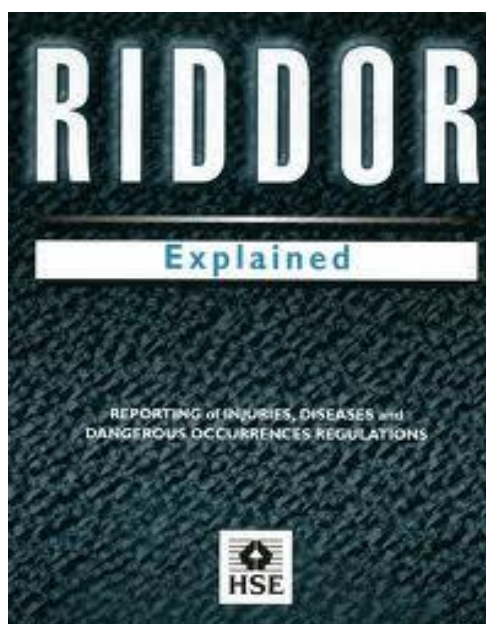
Risk assessments for different business groups are available on the HSE website, a sample of which is produced at appendix 3. Risk assessment need not be an overly complicated process:

1. What is the hazard?
2. Who is likely to be affected?
3. What are the chances of it happening?
4. Record your findings – if necessary
5. Review and update your risk assessment when necessary: if products or methods change or if new, better ways of doing things come to light.

Major causes of accidents are discussed on an individual basis, but one of the major areas of concern in the beauty industry relates to the use of beauty products and how they can affect employees and sometimes your customers.



## 1.4 Accident reporting



When an employee or self-employed person has an accident at work and is off for more than seven days then the incident is reportable to the enforcing authority - in most cases this will be your local authority.

If a member of the public is injured as a result of a work activity and is taken directly to hospital from your salon, then this is also reportable.



While you can report directly to your local authority, the preferred method is online at:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/report.htm>

Reports are monitored by local authorities and investigated according to severity of injury.

Some cases of work-related disease are also reportable: these include dermatitis and asthma.

Needless to say, death at the workplace should be reported as quickly as possible and, outside of normal office hours, the police must be informed and they can contact the enforcing authority (although there is usually an out-of-hours contact number).

## 1.5 Dermatitis

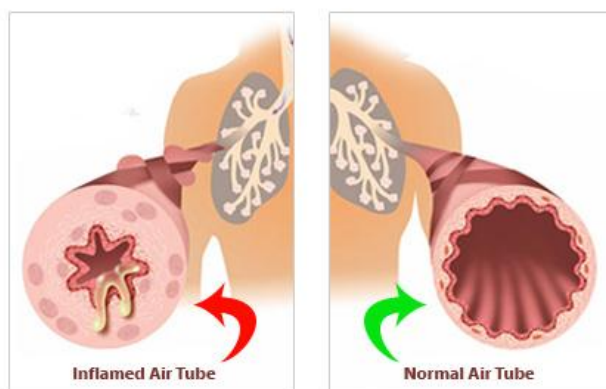
### Skin checks for dermatitis



Essentially, there are three types of dermatitis:

1. The first is caused by frequent washing that removes the natural oils and greases that protect the skin. The cure is to use hand creams that rehydrate the skin. Hand cream can be used to prevent this or gloves used as barrier. Some solvents have a similar degreasing effect, for instance ethanol or acetone.
2. The second type is contact dermatitis, where the chemical actually burns the skin – some of these are used in hair treatment and gloves must be worn when using them, for example, peroxide used for lightening hair colour.
3. The third type is the result of an allergic reaction to a substance: a tiny amount of the product causes rapid and painful inflammation of the skin. The best preventative technique is to substitute a different product that does not cause a reaction, but gloves are the next best.

## 1.6 Asthma



Occupational asthma is different from the more normally encountered asthma in that it is caused by substances at work. These can be chemicals or even biological materials. Common chemicals causing asthma are solvents and acrylates used in the nail industry. Keratin, the basis of hair and nails, can also cause asthma.

The problem with occupational asthma is that it is very unpredictable: someone who is not prone to asthma can develop an allergic response to a substance after years of exposure; then the tiniest exposure can set off the response: wheezing, difficulty breathing, etc. While we do not like to be alarmist, it can be a life threatening condition and some workers have had to change jobs.

The only action available once sensitised is to stop working with the substance causing the asthma, and while there may be alternative products, sometimes those alternatives do not give the finish that the client or practitioner want.

The best course of action is prevention and this requires the provision of extract ventilation preferably in the breathing zone of the operator. Just removing the odours from the room is insufficient – preventing inhalation is essential.

## 1.7 Chemicals and product safety



All products should be safe to use as cosmetics, but they can have occupational health effects so it is important to obtain the material safety data sheets (MSDS) for all products used. Provided they are used in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions there should not be a problem e.g. wear vinyl gloves, eye protection, etc.

However, 'ensure good ventilation' is a very general expression that requires more consideration. Consider the health effects if these are minimal or not listed fine, but if they are severe (for example, intoxication, poison, causes dizziness, etc.) then the ventilation must be very good.

## 1.8 GOOD PRACTICE

In order to reduce the impact of substances on beauty therapists, it is important to:

- Keep the work room well ventilated – this means that air must be brought in as well as extracted
- Use good techniques to minimise exposure to harmful chemicals: keep tops on bottles, use narrow opening tops on bottles, use a bin with a lid (preferably metal)



- Wash hands regularly and use moisturiser – use gloves when necessary



- Use a local extractor or down draught table for nail work



- Use eye protection when necessary, particularly with solvents like acetone which can dissolve the cornea if splashed into the eye and cause blindness



## 1.9 No naked flames



Many of the products or processes used in the beauty industry are flammable. Anything with the symbol on is flammable or highly flammable, but be aware that dusts or aerosols (for example, hair sprays) can form explosive mixtures with air and so all sources of ignition (flames or sparks) must be eliminated.

With regard to electrical equipment, it may be advisable to use equipment rated to operate in a flammable atmosphere. Naked flames, including from gas fires, must not be used. Electric fires can cause fires too so it is best to use radiators for heating.

## 1.10 Slips, Trips and Falls



Slips, trips and falls are the major cause of accidents across all industry sectors and yet they are the most easily preventable.

The golden rules:

1. After washing floors, carefully rinse off (this removes the dirt and detergent which can dry on to produce a slippery surface), then DRY MOP using a mop specially reserved for the purpose.
2. Clear up all liquid spillages immediately, preferably using kitchen paper and ensure that the surface is dry.
3. Clear up all spillages and debris on floors, for example, hair clippings
4. Ensure all electrical cables are safely routed such that they cannot form a trip hazard

Eliminating the causes of slips, trips and falls can reduce personal suffering from injuries, reduce costs to the NHS, and save you facing costly compensation claims.

## 1.11 Musculoskeletal Disorders: Aches and pains

Working in the beauty industry often requires adopting awkward postures whether it's keeping your arms at shoulder height working on someone's hair or bending over a table doing close work on nails.

The important thing is to adjust the work area wherever possible:

- a. Adjust the height of the chair in hairdressing to fit the client – this means you should be able to keep your arms at a comfortable height.



- b. Try to avoid bending over a bench to work on nails. Make sure you have the correct glasses (if you need them) and consider using magnifiers. If you can't help bending in close, take regular breaks to straighten your back.
- c. Avoid bending at the waist whenever possible: use your knees to vary your height or to pick things up from floor level - your legs have much stronger muscles than your back!
- d. Frequent short breaks are essential and these can be built into your work routine

## 1.12 Asbestos

Around 5,000 contractors die every year from asbestos related diseases. These are plumbers, electricians, plasterers, and joiners who have had accidental exposures over their working lives and die and mesothelioma, a particularly aggressive form of cancer.

Looking to the future, legal requirements have been brought in to hopefully eliminate these accidental exposures and prevent deaths which are so tragic to family and friends. It is repeated exposure over a period of time that causes the condition and it often takes 20 – 30 years to take effect.

What do you have to do?

The duty is to manage asbestos containing materials on your premises. This means:

1. Identifying any asbestos containing materials
2. Assessing the condition of any suspect materials and making safe if necessary
3. Informing contractors of any suspect or confirmed asbestos containing materials prior to the contractor starting work.

The most serious types of asbestos you may come across are Asbestos Insulating Board often used for ceilings and lagging (a white powdery material often wrapped onto pipework) used on hot water pipes in boiler rooms.

You are very unlikely to have a boiler room big enough to require lagging, but there are a number of ceilings with asbestos insulating boards. Just because it's there you don't have to remove it: if you don't disturb then it is perfectly ok.

In the event you need specialist advice, you should try the HSE website or contact your local authority before paying for what could be an expensive asbestos survey.

### Asbestos ceiling tiles



### Asbestos Insulating Board used as cladding on a fire door



## 1.13 Electricity

Portable Appliance Testing has limited value in the beauty industry: much of the equipment is double insulated and doesn't have an earth so the test is not appropriate. More important are regular pre-use visual checks: is the plug ok? Does the cable have a fixed point into the equipment? Is the cable clean and undamaged?



The advent of moulded plugs has eliminated the risk of wires coming loose from screw terminals within the plug (the earth wire could come loose and touch the live pin making earthed metal equipment live).



With regard to the mains installation, it should be checked from time to time by a competent electrician: the time interval depends on the age of the installation and the level of use. A hair salon using driers would need checking more frequently than a nail bar because of the heavier power requirements (kilowatts = power).

Sockets need checking



And the supply...





## 1.14 Gas

Following the condition that no naked flames (sources of ignition) should be in the salon, the need for heating and hot water needs to be addressed.

Ideally, some form of radiator would be best for heating and in the absence of a central heating boiler, electrically powered oil-filled radiators are suitable.

Needless to say, the gas boiler should be located in a separate room and tested annually by a Gas Safe engineer.

Do not use open electric fires or LPG heaters in a salon because of the fire risk.

LPG heaters are NOT suitable in salons:



## 1.15 Sun beds



It is illegal for persons under the age of 18 to use sunbeds in a tanning salon – fines of up to £20,000 can be imposed on businesses for failing to comply.

Ill health effects are associated with Ultra Violet light including:

Burns

Skin dryness and itching

Eye irritation/conjunctivitis

Skin cancer

Cataracts

Premature aging of the skin

Records must be kept of each client's use of the sunbed in your salon and advice given on safe exposure (skin type and length of time to be spent on each session).

## 1.16 Fish pedicures



There are a number of conditions that indicate a client should not have a fish pedicure:

Leg waxing or shaving in previous 24 hours

Any open cuts/wounds/abrasions/broken skin on feet or lower legs

Infection on feet including athlete's foot and verruca

Psoriasis, eczema or dermatitis in treatment area

Blood borne infections: Hepatitis B or C or HIV

Diabetes

Bleeding disorders or anticoagulant medication

Any immune deficiency condition

The big problem with fish is keeping a clean environment: filtering, ultra violet lamps, and dilution all have a part to play.

## 1.17 Spray tanning

There are no established chemical hazards in the use of spray tanning equipment although some sources (well-known newspapers who are renowned for mixing up the facts) claim they cause cancer if breathed in.

The containers the spray tan solution arrives in can be very heavy so some means of transporting them around the salon would be a good idea: a trolley or barrow.

If spraying using a gun, a non-slip floor is essential. Spraying booths tend to be fitted with appropriate flooring.

Always follow the manufacturers' instructions.



## Part 2: The technical section (optional)

### 2.1 Health and Safety Law

Employers have a duty under the ***Health and Safety at Work, etc., Act 1974*** to protect the health and safety of their employees so far as is reasonably practicable. Duties also exist to protect members of the public who may be affected by the running of the business. This duty also applies to the self-employed.

There is a raft of regulations made under the Act to specify in detail what is expected of the employer:

- a. ***Workplace (Health Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992*** – these specify the minimum welfare standards in the workplace including number of toilets, wash hand basins, work space, temperature, safe glazing in windows, etc.
- b. ***Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999*** – these require the employer to appoint a competent person to advise on health and safety: in most instances this can be the employer; carry out risk assessments for significant risks. Example risk assessments are available on the HSE website:  
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/casestudies/index.htm>  
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/index.htm>
- c. ***Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended)*** – Employers have a duty to ensure that employees do not carry out manual handling operations that are likely to give rise to injury. Where this is not possible, a detailed risk assessment is required. Current guidance

encourages avoidance of hazardous tasks by using lifting aids and/or placing items in the safe zone (between knee and shoulder height) for lifting.

- d. **Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998** – employers have a duty to make sure all equipment used at work is suitable, safe, and properly maintained.
- e. **Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002** – Employers have a duty to ensure that employees are not exposed to substances hazardous to their health. This brings in the risk assessment principle once more and where substances can be hazardous to health the first choice is to substitute with an alternative, safer product. If this is not possible, additional measures are required such as extract ventilation or barrier methods. Personal protective equipment is the last option, bearing in mind some substances can cause sensitisation and allergic reactions occur at very low levels.



If you require further information, the HSE website has many useful links:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/index.htm>

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/getting-started/index.htm>

but we are happy if you contact us directly for advice or guidance.

## 2.2 Insurance

### ***Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969***

If you are a family business or only employ people closely related to you then you may not need Employers' Liability Insurance. However, if an employee becomes sick or is injured while at work then they may claim compensation. This is what the insurance is for and it is a legal requirement.

Additional information is available at:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/get.htm>

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/hse40.pdf>

Public Liability Insurance is not a legal requirement but it is a good idea to take this out as it offers protection against claims from the public and/or clients.



## 2.3 Safety policies and risk assessment

The safety policy is a requirement of section 2(3) of the **Health and safety at Work etc., Act 1974**. If you have FIVE or more employees, then a written safety policy is required. A document you can fill-in yourself is available at:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/write.htm>

The document requires you to describe the organisation and arrangements you have made to look after your staff, clients, and members of the public. For a small organisation this only needs to be brief – see example on website.

The **Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999** require the employer to appoint a competent person to advise on health and safety and carry out risk assessments for significant risks.



Guidance is available at:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/manage.htm>

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/index.htm>

Example risk assessments are available and there is one specifically for the hair dressing salons:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/casestudies/hairdressers.htm>

Written risk assessments are required for FIVE or more employees.

The requirement for risk assessment arises when the risk is not covered by other legislation, for example, manual handling has its own set of regulations as do hazardous chemicals.

### **Five steps**

Risk assessment is a logical process of:

1. identifying hazards,
2. determining who might be affected,
3. evaluating the risk and devising risk control measures,
4. recording your findings and
5. revising/updating as necessary

In most instances, the example risk assessment should be a good starting point and other matters are addressed elsewhere in this booklet.

## 2.4 Accident reporting

**The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases, and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995** require employers to report certain accidents and diseases to their local authority. The incident must be work related and, in the first instance, involve being unable to work for seven days or more. Other types of accident are reportable but these usually cause the over-seven day rule to kick in, examples being: penetrating eye injury, broken limb, electric shock. Full details are available:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/what-must-i-report.htm>

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/l73.pdf>

Reportable diseases include:

Occupational asthma

Occupational dermatitis

Certain types of poisoning are also reportable and these may be linked to nail products (glues, etc.).

Injuries to members of the public resulting in them going to hospital directly from the salon are also reportable. This must be work related and not a medical emergency: a heart attack or similar is not reportable. If a client faints and bangs their head and goes to hospital this would not be reportable but if they tripped over a loose wire and went to hospital with an injury this would be. If in doubt, you can always check with us.

The purpose of the reporting is help devise accident prevention strategies not to catch you out or prosecute.

## 2.5 Dermatitis

Frequent hand washing can cause degreasing of the skin whereby soaps remove the natural oils which protect skin. This results in a red 'sore' appearance that can be treated with replenishing hand creams. Prevention can be achieved by using mild soaps (described as 'sensitive skin') and frequent application of hand cream. If the problem persists, then gloves must be used, preferably non-latex or powder-free latex. Non-latex gloves include vinyl and nitrile. Powdered latex gloves must be avoided because they can produce an allergic reaction.

Contact dermatitis is caused by chemicals actually burning the skin and the best prevention is to substitute another product. If this is not possible, then gloves must be worn (see above for selection). Where the manufacturer tells you to use gloves it is essential that you follow the guidance. Where gloves are provided with the product, make sure they are suitable: often single use plastic is in the pack and these can split or leak very easily.

There are a number of chemicals that can, over time, produce an allergic response such that even if minute quantities are around, the reaction will occur. In recent years, paraphenylenediamine (PPD) has been added to hair dyes and been responsible for a number of sensitisations in staff as well as clients. Once sensitised, there is no going back – any contact with the sensitising substance will cause the reaction. Increasing exposure thereafter can increase the effect and consequences.

The HSE has a website on dermatitis with further information:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/skin/employ/dermatitis.htm>

## 2.6 Asthma

There is a high incidence of asthma within the population and while drugs are effective for most conditions it can still be a seriously life-threatening illness.

Occupational asthma is just as serious but is entirely preventable by developing good hygiene practices and carefully selecting products for use in the salon.

A wide variety of substances can cause this condition including natural materials such as keratin (the basis of hair and nails), animal dusts, etc. In hairdressing, dyes have sensitising properties and in nail bars acrylates are a particular problem.

It is difficult to predict who will suffer from occupational asthma: though persons who have asthma tend to be more at risk, ANYONE can be sensitised even after years of exposure. Once sensitised, there is no cure and the technician may have to leave the industry if a safer product cannot be found. Even minute exposures can produce an allergic reaction which may be fatal!

Is it work related?

The asthma attack can occur some hours after exposure to the sensitiser, often late at night. This is because it is not the compound that has been breathed in that causes the reaction, it is a breakdown product in the body's metabolism. It takes time for the body to get rid of the substance and in order to do this it must break it down to smaller molecules to pass it from the body. It is during this process that the substance causing the asthma takes effect.

So, we must focus on prevention!

Methyl Methacrylate (MMA) was one of the first compounds to cause concern and ended up being banned in the United States. There is still controversy over whether MMA does cause asthma, so it is even more important to adopt good practice especially when evidence of hazards are not yet identified or acknowledged.

The next compound to be used was Ethyl Methyl Methacrylate (EMA) which is a slightly larger molecule (the 'ethyl' bit) so is less volatile, that is, it does not produce a vapour in the air so easily which can be breathed in. Once in the body, this does break down to MMA so we're back to square one.

And then there were gels...

These have been very effective in reducing the volatile properties of compounds because the molecules are trapped in the gel and can't become airborne.

As professionals, your main concern is the product finish and customer satisfaction so there may be limited choice in what you can use. Most products recommend 'good ventilation' but this is a vague term and not well understood.

The best approach is to prevent persons breathing substances likely to cause asthma and the most effective method is extract ventilation directed at the breathing zone of the operator. Most compounds are heavier than air so a down draught is best: this is usually in the form of a table mounted grill connected to ducting and an extraction fan. While the initial set up may be expensive, the fact that you are protecting someone's life or livelihood makes it very worthwhile.

## 2.7 Chemicals and product safety

All products used in the beauty industry are classified as safe to use on humans under the Cosmetic Products (Safety) Regulations 2008. These regulations are primarily designed to protect customers and not necessarily technicians/stylists. A useful guide to these regulations can be found at:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/39334/10-761-guide-to-cpsr.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/39334/10-761-guide-to-cpsr.pdf)

To deal with health and safety issues for staff reference must be made to the Control of substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2004. These require the employer to control the exposure of employees to hazardous to a safe level. These safe levels are set in EH40 Workplace Exposure Limits and are defined as the maximum levels that do not affect health.

The COSHH Regulations require the employer to assess the exposure of the employees and, in order to make that assessment, the employer must have an understanding of the hazards involved. For this reason, manufacturers are obliged to provide Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) or Safety Data Sheets (SDS) with the following information:

1. Identification of the substance/mixture and of the company/undertaking;
2. Hazards identification;
3. Composition/information on ingredients;
4. First-aid measures;
5. Fire-fighting measures;

6. Accidental release measures;
7. Handling and storage;
8. Exposure controls/personal protection;
9. Physical and chemical properties;
10. Stability and reactivity;
11. Toxicological information;
12. Ecological information;
13. Disposal considerations;
14. Transport information;
15. Regulatory information;
16. Other information.

The critical information is in paragraphs 2 and 8 as this is the detail used for the assessment.

Further advice is available from the health and safety team so don't struggle on your own if you're having difficulty.



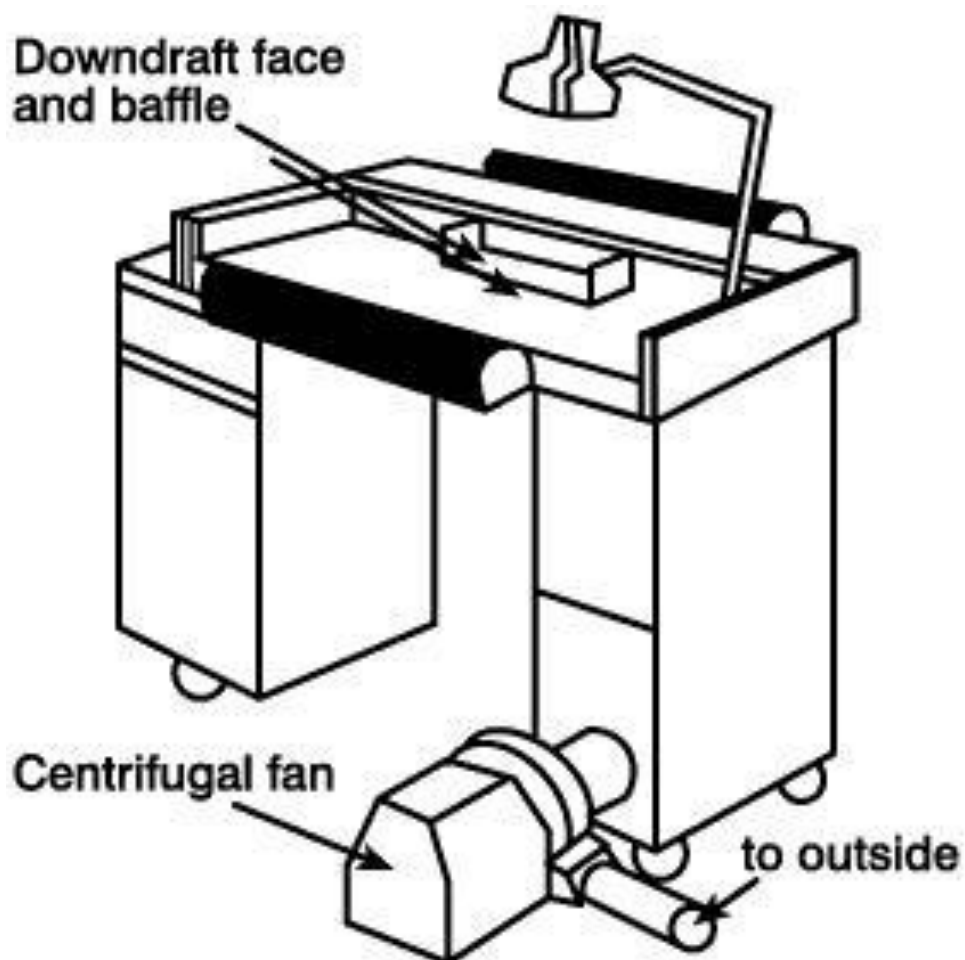


## 2.8 Good Practice

Good practice involves using methods to reduce exposure to all harmful substances and promote good hygiene techniques to prevent biological contamination/transfer.

1. Volatile substances should be stored in narrow neck bottles and applied sparingly to reduce air loading with the vapour.
2. Waste cotton wool, tissues, wipes should be stored in a metal bin with a lid to keep odours down.
3. Extract ventilation is essential when dealing with products that may cause sensitisation. In nail bars the preferred extraction is a downward draught through the table to the outside or a breathing zone extract hood. Filtered/recirculating systems are of limited use with nail products!
4. Hair salons should have good ventilation – this removes chemical odours and sensitisers. It is also helpful in reducing dampness. An extract fan must be balanced with an input, usually a ventilation grill.
5. No eating, drinking, or smoking in the work area.
6. When instructed by the manufacturer, wear suitable protective gloves and eye protection. Suitable goggles are essential with some solvents, particularly Acetone, which can dissolve the cornea.
7. Sleeves should be full length to protect the forearms from contact with chemicals.

8. Where you do not wish to alarm the client by wearing goggles etc., then arms-length operations may be used. These protect the eyes by providing a significant distance between the product and eyes.



## 2.9 No Naked flames: fire risk assessment

In order to work safely with flammable and highly flammable products it is essential to eliminate all sources of ignition:

- a. Naked flames
- b. Sparks
- c. Gas fires
- d. Electric fires

Radiators operated from a central heating boiler located in another room or free-standing oil filled radiators are most suitable for salons.

The next step is to eliminate items which would feed a fire:

- a. Flammables – see good practice: store waste in metal bin with lid. Empty every day to external bin (preferably metal).
- b. Store waste paper, tissues, etc., in separate bin. Empty daily.

Ensure all doors are kept clear of blockages and you can get out quickly if necessary.

So, you have controlled the sources of ignition and material likely to support combustion, now all you need is a suitable fire extinguisher, something like an AFFF (Aqueous Film Forming Foam) and you have completed your fire risk assessment.

A simple fire risk assessment form is available at:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/14899/fsra-5-step-checklist.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/14899/fsra-5-step-checklist.pdf)

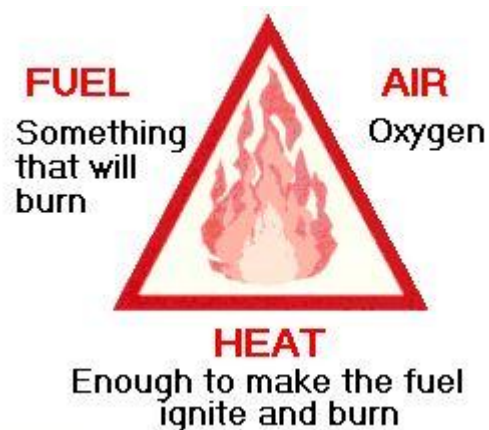
Easy to follow guidance is available at:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/14879/making-your-premises-safe-short-guide.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/14879/making-your-premises-safe-short-guide.pdf)

More detailed guidance:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/14881/fsra-offices-shops.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/14881/fsra-offices-shops.pdf)

The fire triangle:



## 2.10 Slips and Trips

Slips and trips cost the economy millions of pounds every year in lost work time, health care, and accident claims, not to mention the human suffering that can result from serious injuries or fatalities.

Preventing slips is relatively easy: vigilance and good housekeeping are essential. The golden rules have been described in 1.10:

1. After washing floors, carefully rinse off (this removes the dirt and detergent which can dry on to produce a slippery surface), then DRY MOP using a mop specially reserved for the purpose.
2. Clear up all liquid spillages immediately, preferably using kitchen paper and ensure that the surface is dry.
3. Clear up all spillages and debris on floors, for example, hair clippings
4. Ensure all electrical cables are safely routed such that they cannot form a trip hazard.

There is a great deal of information on the HSE website:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/slips/index.htm>

including links to slip assessment tools and learning packages.

The free e-step learning package is in three stages of introductory, intermediate and advanced and take 20 minutes, one hour, or a variable time depending on topics chosen.

## 2.11 Musculoskeletal Disorders: aches and pains

You can spend a lot of time on your feet with your hands held high or spend time leaning over a desk working on clients nails – all situations that are not natural to us and can lead to aches and pains.

While you are young and flexible this may not be an issue, but these restricted postures will take their toll on your body and cause long term damage. Ok, you need to be in these positions to the work, but wherever possible, adjust the work area to suit you:

- a. Hairdressers' chairs have height adjustments so make sure the client is a comfortable height for you.
- b. The use of magnifiers can allow you to vary your position when carrying out detailed close up work.

Whatever you do, try to vary your position as much as possible, even for short periods of time – this prevents muscles 'freezing' and developing problems for the future.

It is important to avoid draughts as these can cause muscles to cool and cause pains with 'differential cooling' i.e. one muscle cools while its matching muscle doesn't causing a 'twist' which shows up as an ache.

## 2.12 Asbestos

If you think you have asbestos in your property, then reference should be made to the HSE website:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/>

To manage asbestos, there is an online tool to assist you through the process:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/managing/index.htm>

While asbestos can be a very serious health risk, it can be safely managed in place in most instances. However, removal can be very expensive and only licensed contractors may work with the material.

## 2.13 Electricity



The main dangers from electricity are electric shock and electrocution (the latter being fatal). Modern systems are built to be safe but do require maintenance to account for wear and tear. In the home, electrical cabling is moderately used but in a business setting the use can be quite heavy with running hair driers, water heaters, and washing machines. This can cause deterioration of the wiring due to heating which degrades the protective insulation.

In a hairdressing salon, it is reasonable to expect areas like the laundry to be tested annually while the main salon could be every 3 to 5 years – all depending on use. A qualified electrician will advise you and take into account the age of the installation.

Portable appliance testing is only useful where earthing is present on electrical equipment. Most equipment fails functionally before it fails electrically, for instance, hand held hair driers, so it can be cheaper to replace items periodically rather than pay for testing.





More important than testing is carrying regular visual checks to make sure equipment is undamaged and operating safely. If the wiring is intact and firmly fixed to the equipment and the plug there is little to go wrong. The casing must be free from cracks or damage. Signs of melting or hardening of the plastic insulation cable indicate some damage which must be further investigated. Replacement can often be cheaper than repair!

## 2.14 Gas



The main hazards from gas are explosion and carbon monoxide poisoning. Regular maintenance and safety checks are essential and may only be carried out by Gas Safe registered gas fitters. It is illegal for anyone to work on gas appliances if they are not Gas Safe registered! Before starting work, check that your gas engineer is registered and has the correct approvals for working on your type of equipment. This can be done online:

<http://www.gassaferegister.co.uk/>

Check the front of the engineer's authorisation card for:

- The photo
- The start date and expiry date
- The licence number
- The security hologram

Check the back of the card to make sure:

- Your engineer is qualified to do the gas work you want done e.g. cooker, boiler, gas fire
- Their qualifications are up to date

You can also check that your engineer is Gas Safe registered by calling Gas Safe Register on 0800 408 5500, using Gas Safe's check an engineer service online or by texting Gas then the engineer licence number to 85080. Please note: Your provider may charge a standard network charge to use this text service.

If you suspect a gas fitter is illegal you can call Gas Safe Register on 0800 408 5500 and report them or use the online reporting an illegal gas fitter service.



## 2.15 Sunbeds

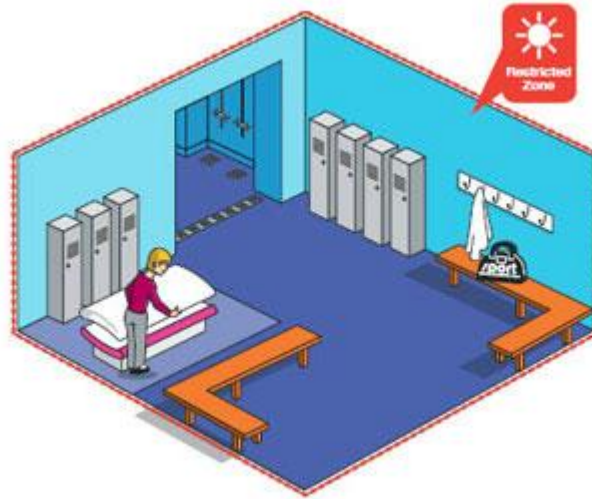
Although ultra violet light is a natural phenomenon, it is still harmful to the skin and can cause serious skin cancers (melanoma). Because it is difficult to measure daily exposure (you can still get sun burn in cloudy conditions), assessing safe exposures on sun beds is largely guess work.

The government have determined that the problem is so serious that persons under eighteen years of age are forbidden from using commercial sun beds – Sunbeds (Regulation) Act 2010:

[http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod\\_consum\\_dh/groups/dh\\_digitalassets/documents/digitalasset/dh\\_125983.pdf](http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/documents/digitalasset/dh_125983.pdf)

Persons under eighteen are not allowed in restricted zones which are defined as ‘a wholly or partly enclosed space and that space is reserved for the users of that sunbed.’ Essentially, any room in a salon that contains a sunbed is off-limits to persons under eighteen.





The way in which you comply with the law will be for you to decide but introducing the following procedures may assist you in this process:

### Management controls

- Train and advise staff on how to check the age of users, including the types of document that can be used to prove age.
- Have written procedures for staff for dealing with people who may be under 18, train staff in these procedures and keep records of this training.

- Keep a written record of any incident (and outcome) where a member of staff challenges a potential user about their age.
- Maintain written records for each user for each session.
- Use till prompts for sunbed use transactions, if the facility is available.
- Display prominent and clear notices that no under-18s are permitted to use sunbeds.
- Display prominent notices by the restricted zone advising that no under-18s may enter the zone.
- Have a system in place to check that under-18s have not entered the restricted zone.
- Ensure when sunbed facilities are provided as part of a membership package, such as at a leisure centre or fitness club, that access to sunbeds is excluded from the membership package for under-18s.
- Provide information on restricted services in brochures and service directories.
- Train and advise staff who are under the age of 18 on the requirement not to use sunbeds (and explain that this is not affected by the fact that they can be present in a restricted zone).

The maximum fine is £20,000.

Guidance on health and safety is available on the HSE website:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg209.pdf>

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/radiation/nonionising/sunbedrevised.pdf>

## 2.16 Fish pedicures



These were very fashionable in 2012 but seem to have disappeared as quickly as they appeared. I suspect that they will be mutating away in the sewers of Cumbria (this is a reference to fish eggs being introduced into the system and not live fish – who would do such a thing?), but for those still earning a living the Health Protection Agency produced definitive guidance:

[http://www.hpa.org.uk/webc/HPAwebFile/HPAweb\\_C/1317131045549](http://www.hpa.org.uk/webc/HPAwebFile/HPAweb_C/1317131045549)

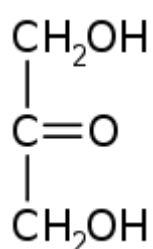
The main concern has always been about infection since the fish use the water as a toilet, but provided the client does not have open wounds and wash their feet carefully afterwards the risk is considered minimal. Most water tanks are treated with ultra violet light which can be an effective steriliser provided the water is clean and clear. Filters are used to remove solid matter and should be cleaned regularly.

## 2.17 Spray tanning



Solutions used in spray tanning may contain nuts so it is important to carry out an allergy test before use: on the client and the operative.

Dihydroxyacetone (DHA) has been used in self-tanning creams since the 1960s and more recently introduced in spray tanning.



There is some evidence emerging from the States and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that indicates that DHA can cause dermatitis and asthma, but European studies do not support this:

[http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific\\_committees/consumer\\_safety/docs/sccs\\_o\\_048.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/consumer_safety/docs/sccs_o_048.pdf)



(Note this is a lengthy scientific document: hard core nerds only!)

The FDA in the States offers the following advice:

"The use of DHA in 'tanning' booths as an all-over spray has not been approved by the FDA, since safety data to support this use has not been submitted to the agency for review and evaluation."

"Consumers should request measures to protect their eyes and mucous membranes and prevent inhalation."

Some scientists claim the chemical may make asthma worse, as well as other lung problems such as emphysema and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

Overall, a precautionary approach should be adopted until further research has been completed or evidence emerges, this would involve operatives using gloves and a spray mask (if appropriate). It would be advisable to have these available for clients upon request, but most of the research indicates that DHA is not usually an eye irritant.

### **Heavy weight**

The spray solution is often supplied in large, heavy containers so measures must be devised to ensure that it can be handled safely in transportation: the use of trolleys or barrows should suffice.



## Appendix 1

Safety Policy pro-forma

Risk Assessment form

Example Risk Assessment: Hairdresser

Controlling hazards applying artificial fingernails

SR11 Hairdressing COSHH Essentials

SR13 Nail Bars COSHH Essentials

