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Reopening: Guidance for Hair and Nail Salons

Guidance Document

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Small and medium (especially non-chain) hair and nail salons have been very challenged during the COVID-19 pandemic as they are viewed as “non-essential” by state governments. Many have been forced to lay off or furlough key staff members, which may complicate re-opening as states start to relax shelter-in-place and stay-at-home restrictions.

With such restrictions beginning to lift, hair and nail salons are faced with difficult questions that must be addressed before reopening, such as:

- How can we protect our employees and customers from the disease while in our salon?
- How do we assure our customers that we are doing all we can to protect them from the disease?
- How can we minimize the risk of disease transmission if those that are ill or those who have had contact with positive COVID-19 people that enter our store?
- What do we do if a customer is sick or not following guidelines?

Measures can be taken to reduce the risk of transmitting COVID-19 from person-to-person spread through respiratory droplets. The use of personal protective equipment, physical barriers, minimizing customers in the salon at one time, appropriate disinfectant procedures, etc. can be put in place to help minimize the potential for exposure and the spread of the virus.

This document offers practical guidance for hair and nail salon owners to implement interim measures to reduce the risk of transmitting COVID-19. It addresses the key questions above and provides tips for employees and customers.

What should the Employer do to protect themselves and their customers

Hair and nail salon owners should continually monitor international (World Health Organization (WHO)), federal (CDC), state, and local guidelines for changes in recommendations, cleaning strategies, and other best management practices. Employers should also consider developing a team of professionals to monitor, assess, and implement new strategies as they become available. In addition, employers should consider the following strategies for reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission in regards to physical distancing, ventilation, enhanced cleaning practices, restrooms, food preparation areas and contact surfaces, personal hygiene, employee wellness, personal protective equipment, training, waste and laundering, and communication.

Physical Distancing

- Limit the number of customers in the shop at one time. Only those customers that are actually getting their hair or nails done should be inside the premises. There is no need to check in at a front desk or to sit in a reception area.
- Consider establishing a process for clients to remain in their cars / outside of the salon until they are notified (either by text or phone call) that their chair is open, and it has been properly disinfected from the previous client.
- Establish an isolated area for all delivery companies to drop off materials and supplies (i.e., minimize their presence in the salon).
- Establish pre-pay systems or self-checkout systems (e.g., portable credit card portals at each chair which is cleaned after each use). Discourage the use of cash.
- If a pre-pay system is not feasible, place a plexiglass partition between cashier clerks and customers.



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- Customers should use his/her own pen to sign credit card authorization. If pens must be used and provided by the salon, they should be disinfected between each use. The same would apply for touch-pad use.
 - Since the 6-foot social distance guideline is not practical in nail salons, to minimize facial contact, wear a face shield or install a plastic partition between the employee and client with ample space cut out where hands or feet can be slid underneath to conduct the manicure or pedicure.
 - Require all clients to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer before working on their nails.
 - Limit face-to-face interaction as much as possible when cutting / working on hair (e.g., stand behind the client as much as possible and always wear a face mask). Consider wearing a face shield as well to further protect the client.
 - As an initial step with each client, thoroughly wash and dry (with towel) their hair before performing any work. NOTE: For those clients that require color, stylist will not typically wash the hair prior to treatment because of adverse effect on coloring process.
 - Train staff on proper social distancing relative to other customers in the shop (that are not their direct client).
 - Use social media and other communication to educate customers/clients on the steps being taken for their protection and what they need to do to protect staff as well.
 - Discourage customers from touching items they don't intend to purchase if absolutely necessary.
- Maximize fresh air through your ventilation system.
 - Maintain relative humidity at 40-60%
 - Ensure restroom is under negative pressure.
 - If you don't know how, ask an HVAC professional and see [ASHRAE](#) updates for more information.
 - Consider using portable HEPA filtration units.
 - If fans such as pedestal fans or hard mounted fans are used in the salon, take steps to minimize air from fans blowing from one person directly at another individual. If fans are disabled or removed, employers should remain aware of, and take steps to prevent, heat hazards.

Enhanced Cleaning Practices

- Select appropriate disinfectants – consider effectiveness and safety
 - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has developed a [list of products](#) that meet EPA's criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2.
 - Review product labels and Safety Data Sheets and follow manufacturer specifications.
 - Consider consulting industrial hygiene experts if additional advice is needed.
- Establish a disinfection routine.
 - Ensure disinfection protocols follow product instructions for application and contact time.
 - Hair dressing and salon chairs / seats, combs and other hair styling tools, point of purchase, credit card payment station should be disinfected after each customer.
 - Consider covering chairs in a non-porous material for easy clean up or use a disposable cover as used in dentist or medical offices. As noted above, clean HVAC intakes and returns daily.
 - Consider using a checklist or audit system to track how often cleaning is conducted.

Ventilation

- Get fresh air to the customers and staff and properly utilize ventilation system. Some ways to do this or seek help:



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- Wipe down / disinfect all cutting and other tools (e.g., combs, brushes, etc.) between clients and at the beginning and end of each shift. Alternatively, stylists should have ample supply of combs and other tools at their disposal (all implements should then be disinfected, washed at the end of the day).
 - All nail tools should be disinfected between use or be single-use only.
 - Consider allowing return customers the option to buy their own nail tool kit.
 - Smocks, towels, work clothing, etc. should be placed in plastic bags after each use and treated as potentially contaminated and laundered per recommendations below.
 - Upon time of procedure, stylists should use paper neck strip to help ensure proper hygiene with the client.
- Due to current uncertainties surrounding the transmission of SARS-CoV-2, care should be taken when using a hand dryer or paper towel.
 - The use of touch or push hand dryers is discouraged due to possible surface contamination. If hand dryers are used, consider touchless devices.
 - Businesses and employers should work with HVAC professionals to ensure that bathrooms are well ventilated.
- Double efforts to keep bathrooms clean and properly disinfected.
 - If only one restroom is available, consider providing a key so disinfection measures can be better controlled.
 - Upon exiting the bathroom, provide a hand cleaning area for clients to disinfect their hands completely.

Restrooms

- Doors to multi-stall restrooms should be able to be opened and closed without touching handles if at all possible.
 - Place a trash can by the door if the door cannot be opened without touching the handle.
- For single restrooms, provide signage and materials (paper towels and trash cans) for individuals to use without touching the handles, and consider providing a key so disinfection measures can be better controlled. Place signs indicating that toilet lids (if present) should be closed before flushing.
- Place signs asking customer and employees to wash hands before and after using the restroom.
- Provide paper towels and air dryers in restrooms.¹
 - The WHO and CDC currently state that hands can be dried using a paper towel or hand dryer.

Personal Hygiene

- Establish a “before and after service” hand washing or sanitizing for all staff.
- Provide hand washing stations at the front of the establishment or alternatively, hand sanitizer if not feasible for all clients that enter the shop. Upon exiting the bathroom, upon entering and upon leaving salon, provide hand sanitizer for clients to disinfect their hands completely.
- Provide hand sanitizer at the point of purchase.

Employee Wellness

- Conduct employee temperature screening and wellness checks before each shift.
 - Temperature screening can include manual (use non-contact infrared thermometers) or thermal camera methods.
 - Employees can self-check temperature, while wearing a glove, or disinfect between use.

¹NOTE VERSION CHANGE: In version 2 of this guidance document, in the section titled “Restrooms” it stated to disconnect or tape off the hand dryer.



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- There are a number of examples available for wellness questionnaires (see Resources below).
- If employee is sick or receives any kind of testing (virus or antibody), results should be reported to employer and timing/decision to go back to work should only be with doctor's approval.

Other Control Measures

- Require the use of gloves for all staff and ensure that the gloves are changed after each client. In addition, require staff to wash their hands after each client.
- Provide or encourage employees to wear face coverings, gloves and to use hand sanitizer. **(NOTE: Homemade face coverings primarily protect others not yourself).**
- Consider wearing face shields

NOTE: If an employer chooses to provide an N95 respirator, please fully consider all the potential OSHA requirements.

Training

- Provide instruction and training to employees on how to:
 - Handle their work clothing properly at home if laundry service is not provided.
 - Properly put on and remove gloves.
 - Clean and disinfect surfaces according to product specifications.
 - Correctly use face coverings and/or respirators.
- Provide Safety Data Sheets for cleaning chemicals and ensure employees are aware of the hazards of use.
- If advice is needed, industrial hygienists have expertise in selecting PPE and training.

Waste and Laundering

- Single-use items and used disinfection materials can be treated as regular waste, following regular

safety guidelines when handling these materials.

- Cloth materials (smock, aprons, towels, work uniforms, etc.) should be washed and dried on the highest temperature setting allowable for the fabric.

Communication

- Communicate to customers what the retail establishment is doing to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.
 - (e.g., disinfection routine, health policies for staff, and health & safety measures in place).
- Consider communicating to clients when it may not be a good idea to come into the salon (e.g. taking care of someone who is COVID-19 positive, exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, being in a high-risk category, etc.). A questionnaire or checklist could be used to clear clients to enter the salon.
- Communicate that the retail establishment has the right to refuse service to anyone exhibiting symptoms or not following guidelines (e.g., physical distancing, wearing a face mask, etc.).
- Platforms for communication could include websites and indoor/outdoor signage.

What should an Employee do to protect themselves and the customer

- Evaluate your health constantly, if you are sick stay home. If you have a temperature stay home. If someone at home is sick, stay home. If you have allergies and sneezing, stay home. **NOTE: Employer HR Policies, HIPPA guidelines and other laws should be followed at all times.**
- Wear mask when out in public and maintain physical distancing.
- Wash your hands when you arrive at work, after each customer, after touching your face or face covering and when you leave work.
- At all times, wear a face covering or something better if you have it.



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- Wear gloves at all times. Change out gloves between customers and wash your hands.
- If provided, wear the face shield when working with clients and disinfect appropriately.
- Let your employer know if you have concerns about the PPE that may be provided to you and that you are properly instructed on how to use it.
- Carry a towel, if you get the urge to sneeze or cough, cover your nose, mouth and mask, attempt to delay the urge to sneeze or cough, immediately leave the building, wash your hands and face thoroughly before going back to work.
- Use a clean, new cape for each client. Ideally, have sufficient number of capes on hand for all clients per day (so as not to re-use). Launder all at the end of the day.

What can a Customer can do to minimize the transmission of Covid-19

- If you are sick stay home. If you have a temperature stay home. If someone in your house is sick, stay home. If you have allergies and can't control sneezing, stay home. Reschedule your appointment to a later date
- Do not enter the salon until your chair is open and it has been disinfected.
- Limit the items you touch within a store to the items you select to purchase.
- Wear a face covering or something better if you have it, probably the style that wraps behind the ears (otherwise, certain face covering styles may interfere with the performance of the haircut or color treatment).
- Wash your hands before and after you leave the building if possible. If not, use hand sanitizer when you enter and before you leave the building.
- Maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from other customers and other employees when walking throughout the salon to the extent possible.
- If you get the urge to sneeze or cough, put on your mask, cover your nose, mouth, and face covering with a napkin or handkerchief, attempt to delay the urge to sneeze or cough, immediately leave the building, wash your hands and face thoroughly before returning.

Resources

- **Professional Beauty Association** – https://www.probeauty.org/docs/default-source/coronavirus-documents/pba-back-to-work-guidelines.pdf?sfvrsn=4afa9a9b_12
- **American Barber Association** – <https://americanbarber.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/The-American-Barber-Association-and-coronavirus.pdf>
- **National Association of Barbers** – <https://nationalbarbers.org/how-to-cope-with-covid-19-in-your-shop/>
- Numerous **wellness questionnaire examples** are available online (e.g., https://doh.sd.gov/documents/COVID19/BusinessScreening_Q&A.pdf)
- The CDC has developed **cleaning and disinfection recommendations for commercial facilities** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>
- The EPA has developed a **list of disinfectants** for use against SARS-CoV-2: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>
- ASHRAE has a list of COVID resources for **commercial buildings**. <https://www.ashrae.org/technical-resources/resources>
- AIHA's Indoor Environmental Quality Committee developed these guidance documents about reopening and cleaning buildings after closures due to COVID-19: [Recovering from COVID-19 Building Closures](#) and [Workplace Cleaning for COVID-19](#).



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Occupational health and safety (OHS) professionals (also known as industrial hygienists) practice the science of anticipating, recognizing, evaluating,

and controlling workplace conditions that may cause workers' injury or illness. Through a continuous improvement cycle of planning, doing, checking and acting, OHS professionals make sure workplaces are healthy and safe.

Get additional resources at AIHA's Coronavirus Outbreak Resource Center.

https://www.aiha.org/public-resources/consumer-resources/coronavirus_outbreak_resources

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These guidance documents were primarily developed for those smaller business that don't have readily available occupational health and safety resources, and designed to help business owners, employers, employees and consumers implement science-backed procedures for limiting the spread of the coronavirus. They are subject to any local, state, or federal directives, laws, or orders about operating a business and should only be used if they do not conflict with any such orders.

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