

## Information Bulletin

NUMBER 33

### Nail Salon Safety

Many people find nail salons a convenient place to frequent because service is quick and economical. Customers have every reason to expect good service, void of any risks to their health. However, recent claims indicate salon owners and operators need to be aware of their customers' health issues and take aggressive action to minimize the risk of infection, injury or business loss.

Customers with diabetes, autoimmune diseases, circulatory ailments and those taking blood thinners must be very careful having manicures and pedicures. Cuticle scissors and other cutting tools, scrubs, and high temperature soaks should be avoided. Customers with these health issues can incur serious infections or injuries resulting in lengthy hospital stays, or more serious health consequences.

Contracting an infection is a serious health risk related to nail cosmetics particularly from manicure and pedicure tools and implements that have not been properly sterilized. Viral infections such as HIV, hepatitis B and C and warts can be transmitted to unsuspecting consumers from improperly sterilized implements. Nail salons must take sanitation very seriously and follow strict sanitation and disinfection guidelines.

Although each of these risks poses considerable health problems for consumers, there are simple ways beauty and nail salons can ensure their current practices will reduce the potential transmission of infectious diseases. Using disposable instruments whenever possible, properly sterilizing instruments and employing proper hand washing practices can virtually eliminate the risks of contracting viral, bacterial and fungal infections.

#### NOTIFY THE CUSTOMER

Knowledge of your customers' health condition(s) can also help reduce the potential for customer injury or illness while also helping to protect your nail salon from large liability losses. If your state cosmetology board does not require a specific warning sign, Farmers recommend salon owners display a warning poster in a conspicuous place. We also recommend including a similar warning as part of the salon's menu of services. Customers are to be encouraged to reveal their medical issues so that the appropriate care and expertise can be provided. Following is a sample warning.

Customers with diabetes, autoimmune diseases, poor circulation, taking blood thinners or who have other medical conditions must notify the salon technician before having a manicure or pedicure service performed. Conditions of these types pose special health risks that make manicure or pedicure services dangerous. Clearly state if you fall into one of these categories so we may take the appropriate action. The salon may deny service if the risk to the customer is considered too great.

Salon owners are encouraged to display the warning in other language(s) if your salon clientele speak languages other than English.

#### PEDICURES

Pedicures for diabetics and those with circulatory problems pose severe risks. Technicians are to test the water temperature of soaking baths, as customers with diabetes, nerve damage and other ailments may not be able to feel the water temperature.

Dirty instruments and poor sanitation can further increase the risk for infections. The best sterilization methods are steam, ethylene oxide gas, dry heat and chemical germicides. Anything that can draw blood-nail clippers, cuticle scissors, callus paring blades, reusable and straight razors-should be soaked in a chemical germicide. Implement practices that insure nail instruments are properly sanitized.

Footbaths should be thoroughly disinfected and drained after each use. Both the water and filters can harbor residual bacteria if not cleaned and disinfected.

Documented cases of lesions have occurred when residual bacteria contained in footbaths were not attended to. Customers with open cuts on their feet or lower legs should not use the footbaths.

### **BEST PRACTICES**

Though salons and technicians are regulated by individual states, usually through their cosmetology boards, salon owners and managers should implement the following best practices:

- Post the salon licenses in a prominent place.
- Post each technician's license and photo near their workspace.

- Ensure the salon remains neat and clean throughout the day.
- Check that nail instruments are properly sanitized. Verify sterilization equipment is in proper working condition
- Provide antibacterial soaps for the technician to use to wash their hands prior to all nail work.
- Provide customers the option of using their own equipment or purchasing their own prior to having a manicure/pedicure.
- Ensure adequate hot water is always available.
- Ensure each customer is provided with fresh soapy water for hand or foot soaking.
- Ensure proper ventilation is provided if artificial nails are applied.
- Recommend that clients with questionable nail conditions seek medical advice.

Post all rules and regulations as required by your state board. Post all salon procedures, rules and regulations in the employee area. Good communication with your employees will help ensure proper nail care and sanitation practices are being followed and will reduce your exposure to a potential liability claim.

*This bulletin is intended only as a reminder and is offered solely as a guide to assist management in its responsibility of providing a safer working environment. This bulletin is not intended to cover all possible hazardous conditions or unsafe acts that may exist. Other unsafe acts or hazardous conditions should also be noted and corrective action taken.*