

# SECTION 11

## WORKPLACE HYGIENE



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<b>SECTION 11 - WORKPLACE HYGIENE.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>11.2 Introduction .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>11.3 Workplace Hygiene &amp; Housekeeping .....</b>	<b>3</b>
11.3.1 Hygiene Tips .....	3
<b>11.4 Sharps Management .....</b>	<b>3</b>
11.4.1 Dealing with a sharps' incident .....	4
<b>11.5 Equipment re-use .....</b>	<b>5</b>
11.5.1 Ultraviolet (UV) cabinets.....	5
<b>11.6 Control measures .....</b>	<b>5</b>
11.6.1 Substitution .....	5
11.6.2 Redesign .....	6
11.6.3 Isolation.....	6
11.6.4 Administrative controls .....	6
11.6.5 Personal protective equipment.....	7
<b>11.7 Covid.....</b>	<b>7</b>
11.7.1 What is Coronavirus? .....	7
11.7.2 How Covid spreads .....	8
11.7.3 Symptoms .....	8
11.7.4 How to protect yourself from coronavirus .....	9
11.7.5 How to protect staff.....	9
<b>11.8 Hygiene and sanitisation .....</b>	<b>10</b>
11.8.1 Cleaning a hair salon safely .....	10
<b>11.9 Resources .....</b>	<b>12</b>

## 11.2 Introduction

Biological hazards are a common hazard – though one many people forget about.

Workers in the Hair industry are at risk of exposure to biological hazards that cause infectious diseases, such as:

- Blood borne diseases, e.g. Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV
- Skin infections, e.g. staphylococcus
- skin infestations, e.g. head lice

Hair industry workers are exposed to blood and body substances through activities such as:

- shaving
- electrolysis
- tweezing
- ear and body piercing
- tattooing
- skin extractions

Exposure to blood and body substances may be from:

- direct contact, e.g. applying first aid to a bleeding client
- indirect contact, e.g. handling contaminated or waste equipment

Blood or body substances do not have to be visible on an instrument for an infection to be transmitted.

Infection with a blood borne disease can occur if infected blood or body substances enter a person's body. This could occur:

- by a skin penetrating injury, e.g. accidentally piercing skin with a used electrolysis needle
- through broken skin, e.g. a cut, wound or dermatitis
- through mucous membranes, e.g. blood splashing into a person's eyes or mouth

Clients may be exposed to blood and body substances from equipment that has not been correctly cleaned and disinfected or sterilised.

## 11.3 Workplace Hygiene & Housekeeping

By providing and maintaining a clean and healthy work environment you will:

- encourage positive staff morale
- promote your business as professional place to work and visit
- reduce the risk within your workplace

### 11.3.1 Hygiene Tips

- Ensure facilities are maintained in a safe, hygienic condition with the provision of adequate cleaning procedures and resources
- Ensure ablution facilities are of a suitable standard and maintained in a safe and healthy condition, including that running water, soap, hand drying and feminine hygiene facilities are available and maintained in each block
- Provide dining facilities of a suitable standard
- Ensure bins are conveniently located and emptied regularly
- Provide facilities for cool storage of food

## 11.4 Sharps Management

Sharps: syringes, electrolysis and tattoo needles, razor blades.

Needle stick injuries arising from discarded sharps pose significant risk of transmission of serious diseases, as well as the risk of significant trauma. Used sharps should be discarded safely within the workplace.

To minimise any risks associated with the disposal of sharps the following needs to be adhered to:

- Sharps disposal kits must be made available at workplace premises. The kit must consist of tongs, an approved portable sharps container and heavy-duty gloves
- Nominated workers are to be trained in the correct use of the sharps disposal kit
- If a discarded sharps item is located in the workplace the person must do the following:
  - Ensure they do not touch the item
  - Notify other people in the vicinity of the item

- Take reasonable steps to highlight the location of the sharp item i.e. get a staff member to stand near the item whilst the appropriate disposal equipment is retrieved.

Waste disposal should comply with any state or local government requirements. Contact your local council for advice.

### 11.4.1 Dealing with a sharps' incident

If a worker suffers a sharp injury, the following must occur:

- ❖ Worker must formally report injury immediately
- ❖ The Responsible person (manager) will organise immediate first aid
- ❖ Retain and safely store sharps item involved in the incident (for further testing)
- ❖ The worker must attend the doctors/hospital to allow for appropriate testing which will test for contamination
- ❖ A worker who suffers a sharps injury should be provided counselling support if required

In the event that a worker is injured, ensure that:

- appropriate first aid is administered immediately
- encourage punctures or cuts to bleed, wash liberally with soap and water and/or dilute with hypochlorite solution
- if the eye or face is exposed to a splash or mucous membrane, rinse gently with water
- The incident is reported and vaccination status checked as soon as possible
- Appropriate medical treatment and tests such as antibody tests for HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C are conducted
- Mandatory counselling about the risk of contracting a blood-borne disease from exposure is conducted
- Every reasonable effort is made to ascertain the infectious status of the source

## 11.5 Equipment re-use

Where equipment is re-used, it must be cleaned and sterilised.

Disinfectant solutions commonly used by many hairdressers for combs, scissors, brushes etc. have been found to be ineffective. The routine disinfection of these implements by this means is not recommended. Disinfection does not achieve the same reduction in microbial contamination levels as sterilisation and must not be used for equipment that penetrates the skin.



### **All equipment that penetrates the skin must be sterile.**

The most effective method of sterilisation is the application of moist heat under pressure for a prescribed time and temperature. A steam steriliser (autoclave) is needed for this purpose.

Wiping needles/spatulas with disinfectant before use does not sterilise the item.

### 11.5.1 Ultraviolet (UV) cabinets

DO NOT STERILISE equipment and other articles placed in them, because the UV radiation does not penetrate to all surfaces. Some viruses are not particularly susceptible to UV radiation, and these cabinets are not suitable storage receptacles because the UV rays damage combs and brushes, and compromise sterile packaging.

## 11.6 Control measures

### 11.6.1 Substitution

- Substitute reusable equipment with single-use, disposable equipment, e.g. needles, spatulas, emery boards, make-up brushes, razors, hand towels

### 11.6.2 Redesign

- Install surfaces, furniture and fittings that are made of non-absorbent materials that can be readily cleaned
- Design the work area so that clean and contaminated instruments are kept separate from each other

### 11.6.3 Isolation

- Make sure all used sharps are placed in a clearly labelled, rigid-walled, puncture resistant container that meets Standards immediately after use
- Make sure all waste that is contaminated with blood or body substances is placed in a leak proof bag or container and sealed

### 11.6.4 Administrative controls

- Develop and implement procedures for:
  - cleaning, disinfecting, sterilising and storing reusable equipment
  - managing blood and body substance spills
  - managing accidental blood and body substance exposures and skin penetrating injuries
  - safe disposal of contaminated waste, including sharps (this should comply with state or local council requirements)
  - cleaning and storing laundry
- Provide information and training for infection control practices and procedures
- Provide Hepatitis B immunisation for workers at risk of exposure to blood and body substances, particularly for workers performing skin penetrating procedures
- Do not reuse equipment marked by the manufacturer as 'single use'
- Do not reuse equipment that has been contaminated with blood or body substances unless it has been cleaned and sterilised
- Dispose of dispensed creams, ointments and lotions and do not return them to the original containers
- Do not reuse wax unless it has been decontaminated
- Treat all blood and body substances as potentially infectious and take standard precautions to prevent exposure, e.g. wearing disposable gloves, good hygiene practices safe handling of sharps
- Ensure there is adequate hand washing facilities

- Provide a number of sets of equipment to allow some equipment to be cleaned and disinfected or sterilised while others are in use
- Follow the recommended dilutions and storage requirements for disinfectants and observe use-by dates

### 11.6.5 Personal protective equipment

- Wear disposable gloves for all contact with blood and body substances, and when performing skin penetration procedures, such as electrolysis, skin extractions, tattooing and ear and body piercing
- Wear gloves when cleaning contaminated equipment
- Make sure all abrasions, cuts or lesions are covered by waterproof dressings
- Wear eye and/or face protection when performing a procedure, such as cleaning contaminated equipment, which may cause a splashing hazard
- Use devices, such as gloves and finger cots, to protect nail technicians from abrasive injuries from files

## 11.7 Covid

COVID-19 remains a public health issue and there is public health advice that businesses can use to reduce the risk. [The UK Health Security Agency](#) still recorded, in the week of 16 October 2024, 3,067 cases of Covid, and 199 deaths from Covid.

Although HSE no longer expects Covid-19 control measures, employers must continue to protect their workers from harm – this includes Covid-19.

### 11.7.1 What is Coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that may cause respiratory illnesses in humans ranging from common colds to more severe conditions such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome (MERS).

'Novel coronavirus' was a new, previously unidentified strain of coronavirus. It was named SARS-CoV-2 by the World Health Organisation (WHO). The

disease it has caused has been named “Coronavirus Disease 2019” (or “COVID-19”).

### 11.7.2 How Covid spreads

COVID-19 can spread from person to person usually through close contact with an infected person or through respiratory droplets that are dispersed into the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It may also be possible to get the virus by touching a surface or object contaminated with the virus and then touching your mouth, nose or eyes, but it is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

### 11.7.3 Symptoms

COVID-19 affects different people in different ways. Most infected people will develop mild to moderate illness and recover without hospitalisation.

Most common symptoms:

- fever
- chills
- sore throat

Less common symptoms:

- muscle aches and heavy arms or legs
- severe fatigue or tiredness
- runny or blocked nose, or sneezing
- headache
- sore eyes
- dizziness
- new and persistent cough
- tight chest or chest pain
- shortness of breath
- hoarse voice
- numbness or tingling
- appetite loss, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain or diarrhoea
- loss or change of sense of taste or smell
- difficulty sleeping

The consequences of severe COVID-19 include death, respiratory failure, sepsis, thromboembolism (blood clots), and multiorgan failure, including injury to the heart, liver or kidneys.

Seek immediate medical attention if you have serious symptoms:

- difficulty breathing, especially at rest, or unable to speak in sentences
- confusion
- drowsiness or loss of consciousness
- persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- skin being cold or clammy, or turning pale or a bluish colour
- loss of speech or movement

People with mild symptoms who are otherwise healthy should manage their symptoms at home.

On average it takes 5–6 days from when someone is infected with the virus for symptoms to show, however it can take up to 14 days.

### **11.7.4 How to protect yourself from coronavirus**

You can reduce your chances of being infected or spreading COVID-19 by taking some simple precautions:

- Wash your hands with soap and water frequently. If soap and water are not readily accessible, use alcohol-based sanitisers.
- Avoid contact with people who are ill.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your bent elbow when you sneeze or cough. Make sure to dispose of the tissue immediately.
- If you are feeling unwell, stay home.

### **11.7.5 How to protect staff**

The safety and wellness of the staff is a big priority. You need to have a Staff Illness Policy, covering COVID-19. The policy will need to:

- Provide thorough training for the team on the standard prevention recommendations and your additional in salon measures

- Provide thorough training for the team on recognising the symptoms of COVID-19
- Encourage your team to stay home if they have any symptoms or have been in close contact with anyone who has
- Check your sick leave policies are in line with public health guidance and that every team member knows what the policy is
- Add a policy to send home with anyone who comes into the salon displaying any symptoms or develops them while at work
- Be sympathetic and flexible with team members who might need to stay home because someone in their household is sick or they are caring for a vulnerable person
- Lead by example: follow these guidelines too

## 11.8 Hygiene and sanitisation

The salon must be clean, sanitised and ready to reopen.

Steps to be considered:

- Workstations need to be fully cleaned between clients
- Tools, objects and surfaces that are touched regularly such as reception desks, trolleys, coffee machines, hairstyling tools and machines need to be sanitised and cleaned throughout the day – with most being cleaned between clients
- Disposable gowns for each client
- Using signs and posters to build awareness of good hand washing technique, the need to increase hand washing frequency, avoid touching your face and to cough or sneeze into a tissue which is binned safely
- Providing hand sanitiser in multiple locations throughout the salon
- Setting clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets to ensure they are kept clean
- Provide waste facilities and frequent rubbish collection
- Provide paper towels in the bathrooms
- Limit customer handling of products

### 11.8.1 Cleaning a hair salon safely

All equipment and surfaces need to be cleaned and disinfected regularly to help maintain them and to help prevent the spread of infection through

contamination. Unsafe or unhygienic practices can affect the health of both the customer and the worker.

However, cleaning chemicals are also a hazardous substance and need to be used with care in order to promote health and safety in your hair salon.

You should:

- Keep the work area clean and tidy
- Disinfect shower heads once a week
- Towels need to be washed properly and cleaned between uses
- Clean up spills straight away (clean-as-you-go)
- Wash out all equipment after use and dispose of any waste safely
- Thoroughly clean all equipment at the end of each day
- Make up only as much solution as you will need for immediate use.
- For equipment that comes into contact with skin, clean it before and after each use

To clean equipment, use hot soapy water before disinfecting or sterilising it so as to remove any residue that may prevent the disinfectant from working. A fresh disinfection solution should be prepared each day and the container should be thoroughly cleaned before refilling.

You should prepare a schedule of daily, weekly, and monthly tasks and assign them as duties. As part of the schedule, it's useful to note the right cleaning products and the appropriate PPE to wear for each task.

## 11.9 Resources

For more information, see

[Tattooing and body piercing guidance toolkit](#) (Public Health England)

[SR12 Electrolysis, piercing, tattooing and micro-pigmentation](#) (HSE)

[INDG342 Blood-borne viruses in the workplace](#) (HSE)

[INDG453 Reporting accidents and incidents at work](#) (HSE)

Poster: [Covid-19 Coronavirus Symptoms](#) (WHO)

[Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) advice for the public: Mythbusters](#) (WHO)

Poster: [How to wear a medical mask safely](#) (WHO)

Poster: [Best practice: how to hand wash](#) (UK Health Security Agency)

[Hair & Beauty Salon Cleaning Schedule](#) (BCHS)

[Infection risks to new and expectant mothers in the workplace A guide for employers](#) (HSE)