



HAIRDRESSERS REGISTRATION
BOARD OF WA

HAIRDRESSERS GUIDE TO OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH



This document is a summary only and should be read in conjunction with the complete Code of Practice for Occupational Safety and Health in the Hairdressing Industry of Western Australian, when it becomes available.

INTRODUCTION

A Code of Practice for Occupational Safety and Health in the Hairdressing Industry in Western Australia is being developed to ensure that the management of OS&H is implemented in a safe manner anywhere that hairdressing is practiced.

The purpose of a Code of Practice is to provide practical guidance on ways of achieving compliance with statutory laws, duties and obligations.

WHAT DOES THE LAW REQUIRE?

The responsibility for ensuring that Occupational Safety and Health (OS&H) policies and procedures are developed rests with the employer who, along with the person in control of the workplace, is responsible for implementing the OS&H Act and Regulations in the workplace.

If you are

- an owner of a salon
- an employer
- an employee
- a self employed hairdresser.

you have a duty of care under the OS&H Act to ensure the health and safety of yourself and others.

Duty of care is a legal requirement and all employers and employees must take all reasonable measures to avoid any injury or harm to themselves and/or others in the workplace.

UNDER THE OS&H ACT

Employers must:

- provide a safe place of work that does not expose employees, young people, other workers or visitors to hazards in the workplace.
- provide information, instruction, training and supervision to employees on OS&H matters
- consult with employees on OS&H matters
- provide appropriate protective clothing and equipment
- ensure safe use, cleaning, maintenance, transportation and disposal of substances in the workplace that may be toxic.

Employees must:

- take reasonable care to protect their own safety and health as well as the safety and health of others
- cooperate with their employer in matters relating to OS&H

MANAGEMENT OF OS&H

An occupational safety and health management system should contain the following elements:

- Management Commitment
- Planning
- Consultation
- Training
- Risk Management

Management Commitment

Management can show their commitment to OS&H by:

- establishing an OS&H policy
- identifying OS&H objectives for their hairdressing business
- allocating adequate resources to achieve OS&H objectives.

Planning

Planning includes setting standards for management and employees by establishing:

- How will this business ensure sound OS&H practices are implemented?
- Who is responsible for the implementation?
- What resources are required for the implementation?
- When will the OS&H practices be implemented?
- How will workers identify and report hazards to the employer?

Planning should consider all factors likely to affect the achievement of the OS&H objectives.

Consultation

Under OS&H legislation it is a requirement that employers consult with their employees on matters relating to OS&H.

In small salons consultation may simply be informal discussions with staff on matters that may have potential to cause injury.

It is important that employees have a basic understanding of what could be considered high-risk activities in the salon. By establishing a system for two-way communication where employers listen to and cooperate with employees then management can ensure OS&H decisions are based on the best and most up-to-date information.

In larger salons or in large organisations that involve hairdressing, consultation may be achieved through more formal means that could involve any or all of the following:

- appointment of elected health and safety representatives
- meetings with OS&H Committees
- external employee representatives

Where an issue cannot be resolved an employer or employee may contact WorkSafe Western Australia (telephone 1300 307 877). An inspector may then attend the premises to assist in the resolution of the issue.

Training in OS&H

To avoid injury and harm to health it is important that new or inexperienced workers, including those that have been away from the workforce for some time, be adequately trained in OS&H.

This should include:

- salon induction training
- an awareness of the hazards associated with hairdressing
- training in ways of reducing the risks associated with the hazards

It is also essential that new or inexperienced workers be adequately supervised.

Risk Management in the Salon

Under OS&H Regulations there is a requirement to:

- identify potential workplace hazards
- assess the risk of injury or harm arising from any hazard
- consider the means by which the risk may be reduced.

Risk management involves a four-step process:

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|--------|-----------------------|
| Step 1 | Hazard identification |
| Step 2 | Risk assessment |
| Step 3 | Risk control |
| Step 4 | Review and evaluation |

Hazard Identification

STEP 1

Identifying hazards should include:

- consulting with employees
- regular workplace inspections
- ensuring that the information supplied by manufacturers and suppliers is regularly updated and made available to all in the workplace.

Some common Hazards include:

Chemicals

Information on chemical hazards can be obtained from:

- material safety data sheet (MSDS)
- the product label
- the manufacturer
- WorkSafe WA.

Electrical Appliances

Accidents in the workplace can result from contact with faulty electrical equipment that may have become 'live' or from contact with worn or damaged power cords and switches. In salons the presence of water increases the risk of electrocution or injury.

Electric shock may be experienced if hand held hair dryers are used in moist conditions or if a hairdryer is damaged through constant use or has been dropped. The consequences of such an event could be fatal.

Other Equipment

Possible hazards that may be associated with other equipment include:

- injury due to cutting or stabbing with scissors
- injury or ill health due to poor ergonomic design or method of work. Eg. Chairs at the wrong height etc.

Slips, Trips and Falls

Factors that may cause a slip, trip or fall in a hairdressing salon include:

- slippery surfaces like wet or polished floors
- unsuitable footwear
- objects such as footstools, equipment or rubbish causing obstructions in work areas
- electrical cables trailing across the floor
- hair left on floor.

Risk Assessment

STEP 2

When evaluating the risk of harm or injury from a hazard in a salon, there are two questions that must be asked:

What is the likelihood of a situation or event actually occurring? (eg. Highly likely, likely, unlikely)

What could be the extent of injury or harm should such an event actually occur? (eg. Fatal, serious, moderate, no injury)

Risk Control

STEP 3

Where a risk to safety or health has been identified controls must be introduced to eliminate or minimise that risk.

For example in the event of an electrical hazard associated with the use of a hairdryer a number of controls could be applied. The salon owner or employer can reduce the level of risk to an acceptable level by:

- installing residual current devices (RCDs) at the main switchboard
- implementing appropriate procedures relating to use, care and maintenance of hairdryers

- arranging annual testing and tagging of electrical equipment by a competent electrician
- conducting training in safe work practices.

Risk Review and Evaluation

STEP 4

Records should be kept of each and every risk assessment. This way should injury or harm to health occur it is possible to go back to the original records to see if the original assessment overlooked a possible hazard.

There is a requirement under the OS&H Act for employers to report any injury that requires ten or more days or shifts off work to the Commissioner of Worksafe WA. This could include injuries such as back or wrist injuries, dermatitis, slips, trips, falls or cuts. There are also a number of injury types that must be notified regardless of time lost, ie. Under regulation 2.4:

2.4 Notification under section 231 of certain injuries

(1) For the purpose of section 231 (2)(a) of the Act, the kinds of injury incurred by an employee to be notified by an employer to the Commissioner are –

- (a) a fracture of the skull, spine or pelvis;
- (b) a fracture of any bone –
 - (i) in the arm, other than in the wrists or hand;
 - (ii) in the leg, other than a bone in the ankle or foot;
- (c) an amputation of an arm, a hand, finger, finger joint, leg, foot, toe or toe joint;
- (d) the loss of sight of an eye;
- (e) any injury other than an injury of a kind referred to in paragraphs (a) to (d) which, in the opinion of a medical practitioner, is likely to prevent the employee from being able to work within 10 days of the day on which the injury occurred.

FURTHER INFORMATION

HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS)

For hazardous substances the legislation requires that manufacturers produce a new MSDS at least every five years to ensure that it is up to date. Users of the substance will have to review their risk assessment for that substance at least every five years

An MSDS provides information about ingredients, potential health effects, safe use, first aid and storage of the hazardous substance. Employers are required to:

- keep a register containing a list of all hazardous substances used at the workplace and the current MSDS for each substance
- obtain a copy from your supplier if it was not supplied with the first order
- keep a copy of the MSDS close to where the hazardous substance is being used.

Ventilation in the Workplace

Work involving hazardous substances such as chemical reformation and hair colouring products should occur in a well-ventilated area which has good air quality control .

BLOOD BORNE DISEASES AND BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS

In any occupation where there is exposure to blood and other bodily fluids, there is always the potential for the transmission of blood borne infections such as:

- Hepatitis B
- Hepatitis C
- Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)

Biological hazards include:

- skin infestations eg head lice
- staphylococcus aureus

Unfortunately apart from visible skin or hair conditions a hairdresser has no means of knowing whether or not clients are infected.

DERMATITIS

Dermatitis is an inflammation of the skin and most often affects the hands.

There are three types of dermatitis

- Irritant contact dermatitis: caused by contact with irritant substances, such as water, shampoo, cleaning agents and other strong chemicals.
- Allergic contact dermatitis: caused by chemicals in dyes and tints, perm solutions and bleach.
- Contact urticaria: caused by an allergy to particular proteins found in disposable latex gloves and bleach. In particular avoid using cheap, powdered, disposable latex gloves.

Chronic effects may take some time to develop. The likelihood of a hazardous substance causing health effects depends on a number of factors including:

- the toxicity of the substance
- the amount of substance that workers are exposed to
- the length of exposure
- the frequency of exposure
- the route of entry into the body, e.g. skin absorption, inhalation or ingestion.

To determine whether a chemical product is a hazardous substance, read the label and material safety data sheet (MSDS). If you are unsure contact your supplier.

ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

Under general duty of care employers should have a clearly defined policy with supporting procedures on alcohol and other drugs in the workplace. The policy and procedures should relate to employees and clients or visitors to the workplace.

Having an alcohol and other drug policy demonstrates the commitment of management to providing a safe and healthy workplace.

MANUAL HANDLING AND ERGONOMIC PROBLEMS

Manual Handling

Back injuries are most commonly caused by manual handling and can be prevented. (ie. Standing, bending etc.) It is the responsibility of the employer or the person with control of the workplace to ensure that any manual handling is performed in such a way as to eliminate or minimise the risk of injury.

Ergonomic Problems

- lower back problems - caused by standing for long periods of time, adopting awkward postures, twisting and sitting on chairs or stools without a back rest or leg support
- leg discomfort - caused by standing for long periods of time
- shoulder problems - occurring from working with the arms held at or above shoulder level, for example, when cutting or styling hair
- neck problems - due to bending the head forward or turning to the side, perhaps, to view the client's hair
- wrist and hand problems – caused by gripping, repetitive or forceful movements.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE AND BULLYING

Workplace violence and bullying involves incidents that physically or psychologically harms another person. This includes situations where employees and other people are exposed to:

- physical assault
- verbal abuse
- threats
- intimidation
- harassment (sexual or racial)
- bullying.

Employers have a duty under OS&H Regulations to provide safe systems of work, information, training and supervision and to consult and cooperate with employees.

Employers have a legal duty under the Federal Sex Discrimination Act to protect employees from sexual harassment by having a sexual harassment policy and grievance procedure in place.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT

If personal protective clothing and equipment is necessary, then under the OS&H Act, there is an obligation upon the employer to provide such clothing and equipment at no cost to the employee.

In a typical salon the following protective clothing should be available if the MSDS for a chemical indicates it is required when undertaking tasks with that chemical.

Protective clothing could include such items as:

- protective face and or eyewear should be worn when performing any procedure that may cause splash or spray of any chemical
- impermeable gloves
- splash proof apron.

Employers also have an obligation to ensure that clothing, including footwear, worn in the workplace comply with safety requirements under the Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996 and the Hairdressing Establishment Regulations 1972.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Every workplace must have emergency policies and procedures in place which include:

- evacuation procedures
- safe use of fire extinguishers
- bomb threat procedures
- armed hold-up

FIRST AID

It is a requirement of the OS&H Regulations that First Aid Kits are available on the workplace premises.

Any Questions?

Should you have any queries or need further information please don't hesitate to contact the Hairdressers Registration Board of WA on (08) 9381 9966.

The Code of Practice summary document has been prepared by the Hairdressers Registration Board of WA to advise and inform the Hairdressing Industry of its responsibilities and obligations under law.

The Code of Practice is being developed from a range of Acts and Regulations that relate to the workplace in general and hairdressing salons in particular and will be enforceable by WorkSafe WA once approved under Section 57 of the Occupational Safety & Health Act 1984.

A complete version of the Code of Practice for Occupational Safety and Health in the Hairdressing Industry of Western Australian will be available for purchase upon completion from the Hairdressers Registration Board of WA.



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