

HAIRDRESSER AND BARBER PUBLIC HEALTH GUIDELINES



For more information about requirements for hairdressers and barbers, Contact Council's Environment Health Team on 4560 4575.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This guideline is largely based upon a document entitled "Public Health Guideline for the Hairdressing and Barber Industry" Jan 2016 developed by Government of Western Australia – Department of Health.

This document has been developed in a collaborative partnership between Penrith City Council and TAFE NSW (Nepean).

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1.0 - BACKGROUND

Currently in NSW, businesses that perform skin penetration procedures are regulated under the provisions of the Public Health Act 2010 and Public Health Regulation 2012. Typically, hairdressing is not considered a skin penetration activity and is not governed by this legislation.

However, Schedule 2 Part 2 of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 outlines the Standard for Hairdressers Shops. Should a premise begin conducting skin penetration procedures you are required to contact Councils Environmental Health section to ensure you are complying with the required Public Health Regulation.

2.0 - PURPOSE

This guideline is designed to provide up to date information on best practice techniques and infection control standards for the hairdressing industry.

3.0 - INTRODUCTION

Transmission of blood-borne viruses and infections is considered to be relatively low risk in the hairdressing industry. However, it is still important that a hairdresser or barber consistently follows good hygiene practices to prevent the possible transmission of infection to their clients. Although the risks are minimal, a range of regular procedures performed in the industry may potentially expose clients and the hairdresser to infections if precautions are not taken.

Types of infections may include:

- Bacterial such as Staphylococcus aureus (Golden staph or MRSA)
- Viral such as herpes, HIV, hepatitis B, hepatitis C
- Fungal such as Candida albicans infections
- Infestations such as head lice, scabies

A hairdresser should examine the steps of a procedure or treatment, and identify what risks are involved and know how to best prevent those risks. Accidentally nicking or cutting a client who has a blood-borne virus (such as HIV, hepatitis B or hepatitis C) with scissors, may put the next client or the hairdresser at risk if appropriate measures are not taken. A person with a blood-borne virus does not have to disclose that they have the disease to a hairdresser.

There are many people in the community who are unaware that they have a blood-borne virus or other type of infection. Therefore, it must be assumed that all blood and body fluids are potentially infectious and therefore standard precautions must be applied to prevent the transmission of infections.

It is the responsibility of the business owner or supervisors to ensure all employees who perform hairdressing procedures have an understanding of how infections are spread, and how they can prevent the spread of infection by adopting and using the recommended standards.

Staff and supervisors must be able to do their work in ways that ensure a business performs safe and hygienic procedures. Staff and supervisors must know about issues associated with infection control, cleaning and disinfection relevant to the business activities and the jobs they do.

“The business owner or manager should ensure every hairdresser has infection control and prevention skills and knowledge”.

4.0 - HYGIENE STANDARDS

Hand Hygiene

Hand hygiene using liquid soap or an alcohol based hand rub is an essential element of good personal hygiene. An alcohol-based hand rub can be used to sanitise clean hands. Hands must be washed with soap and water when soiled. Each premises should have a basin designated for hand washing only, equipped with warm running potable water, soap and single use towels, that is not used for cleaning equipment or washing eating and drinking utensils.

Hand hygiene should be performed:

- before and after attending to a client
- after using the toilet facilities
- after eating and/or smoking
- before and after treating a cut or wound
- after sneezing, coughing or blowing your nose
- after touching garbage and
- after your hands are exposed to potential contaminants.

What is the right way to wash your hands?

Follow the five steps below to effectively wash your hands:

1. Wet your hands with clean, warm running water, turn off the tap and apply soap.
2. Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds.
4. Rinse your hands well under clean, warm running water.
5. Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

Cuts and Abrasions

As intact skin is a natural defence against infection, cuts or breaks in the skin or the presence of skin lesions are possible points of entry for infectious organisms. If these are infected they can be a possible source of transmission of infectious organisms.

To reduce the risk of cross-transmission of infectious organisms, cuts and abrasions should be covered with waterproof dressings, or the hairdresser must not perform the procedure until the wound is treated. Alternatively gloves may be used.

Wounds and Infections on Client

If a client has an open wound or infection, open sores or abrasions, or the hairdresser does not feel comfortable providing a service to a client due to a skin condition, the hairdresser should recommend they consult their general practitioner and have the condition treated before they return.

Alternatively the hairdresser may elect to provide a service to a client, even if they have a skin abrasion or infection, if they believe they can appropriately provide the service around the condition.

5.0 - CLEANING AND DISINFECTING INSTRUMENTS

Instruments used for different types of hairdressing procedures will require different levels of cleaning and disinfection depending on the level of risk of exposing a client to potential blood-borne viruses.

Cleaning is the physical removal of dirt from instruments by washing in detergent and warm water to remove protein residues and organic matter from equipment.

Disinfection is the killing of disease causing micro-organisms except bacterial spores.

Cleaning Instruments

For the majority of instruments used during a hairdressing procedure, scrubbing with warm water and detergent is sufficient, as they typically have not penetrated the skin membrane.

Items that cannot be fully immersed should be wiped over using a lint-free cloth dampened in warm water and detergent, than rinsed and dried. A 70% ethanol alcohol solution should then be used to disinfect the item.

Combs, brushes, rollers etc.

- Remove all visible hair or other material from equipment.
- Rinse under warm water to remove loosened debris.
- Fill the equipment wash sink with warm water and detergent.
- The equipment should be immersed and scrubbed.
- Rinse in warm water to remove any residue.
- All equipment should be dried after the cleaning process, either air dried or using a clean dry cloth.
- Visually inspect the cleanliness of the item.

Scissors

- Use a clean cloth to remove all visible hair, paying particular attention to the hinge joint.
- Wipe over scissors blades with a 70% alcohol preparation (small alcohol wipes in individual sachets are ideal for this).
- Allow to dry before use.

Clippers

- Use a small brush to remove any hair from the clippers.
- Wipe over all parts of the clippers with a 70% alcohol preparation (small alcohol wipes in individual sachets are ideal for this), and
- Allow to dry before use.

“Equipment must be cleaned after each client use”

Disinfecting Instruments

Instruments that do not come into contact with blood or bodily fluids during normal use do not need to be disinfected. However, if an instrument such as scissors accidentally pierces nicks or cuts the skin it will need to be disinfected before being used on another client. The use of disinfectants does not replace the need for good cleaning practices, and all equipment must be thoroughly cleaned before disinfection.

Chemical Disinfection

Disinfectants must be used when equipment or the environment is contaminated with blood or other body substances. Only disinfectants specified in the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods (ARTG) should be used.

Solutions must be labelled appropriately (with the name, date and dilution strength), and must be used and stored according to the manufacturer's instructions.

“Equipment should be stored dry and must not be stored in a disinfectant or left soaking for an extended time”.

Cleaning and disinfection of common hairdressing equipment

Instrument	Health risk	Control	How often
HIGH RISK OF INFECTION			
Razors (single use only)	All razors and blades are considered to be contaminated with blood, body fluids or substances and may spread skin infections or blood borne viruses.	Must be single-use products and must be disposed of into an appropriate sharps container after each use.	Dispose of after each client.
Cut throat razor blades (single use only)	All razors and blades are considered to be contaminated with blood, body fluids or substances and may spread skin infections or blood borne viruses.	Must be single-use blades and must be disposed of into an appropriate sharps container after each use.	Dispose of after each client.
Electric haircutting razors	Potential for skin infections. Where the blade comes into direct contact with the skin there is a risk of blood borne virus transmission.	Clean and disinfect clipper guides. Dispose of blades that come into contact with the skin into an appropriate sharps container. Wipe over razor body with a damp cloth containing detergent and water and an alcohol solution of 70%.	Dispose of after each client.
MODERATE RISK OF INFECTION			
Scissors / clippers	Potential for skin infections or blood borne virus transmission	Wipe over scissor and clipper blades with a 70% alcohol preparation.	After each client.
Capes and Wraps	May spread pediculosis	Wash in warm / hot water	After each client unless

	(head lice infestation).	and detergent.	disposable paper used around neck.
Shaving brushes	Potential for spreading skin infections.	Wash in warm / hot water and detergent. Dry thoroughly.	After each client.
LOW RISK OF INFECTION			
Equipment Trolley	Potential for contamination.	Clean with warm water and detergent.	At least weekly.
Combs, brushes, clips and rollers	May spread pediculosis (head lice infestation) or other infections	Scrub clean in warm water and detergent.	After each client.
Dye mixing bowls	Chemical contamination	Wash in warm water and detergent.	After each use.

Animals

Animals, other than assistance animals, should not be allowed in areas where procedures are undertaken. Having animals in the premises should be discouraged.

Linen / Towels / Disposable Sheets

Disposable paper towels, capes, or clean linen are recommended where appropriate, and must be changed for each client. Used / soiled linen, towels and protective clothing must be laundered using hot water (>60°C) and detergent. Domestic laundering is sufficient, and washing may be taken offsite for laundering.

If linen or towels are stained with blood then those items must be washed in cold or cool water no more than 35°C (hot water will set blood stains). When the stains are removed the linen can then be processed as above. All clean linen, towels and clothing must be stored in a clean, dry area to reduce contamination.

Pump Bottles / Bulk Products

Pump outlets, bottles and nozzles are a potential source of contamination, particularly due to the build-up of contents around the outlet. Nozzles should be cleaned frequently and dried before being replaced. Wash bottles and nozzles in warm water and detergent, rinse them under hot running water, and dry them using a lint-free cloth, before refilling the bottle or replacing the pump/spray nozzle. Pump/spray bottles must never be topped up.

Cleaning the Premises

Routine cleaning of work areas is important because deposits of dust, soil and viruses/bacteria on surfaces can transmit infection. After each client, all chairs, couches, and benches where skin contact occurs should be washed with detergent and water. Hair should be regularly swept up between each client. Products used for general cleaning must be suitable for the purpose and the types of products used are at the discretion of the premises. As a general rule, detergent and water are all that is required for general cleaning. Chemical disinfectants are not recommended for routine cleaning.

6.0 - PUBLIC HEALTH RISKS

Personal Protection

Personal protection is used to protect both the client and hairdresser by providing a physical barrier to infections caused by dirt, blood and excretions. Protection includes:

- washable aprons
- disposable gloves
- surgical masks
- protective eye goggles

When choosing the right protective clothing/equipment consider:

- The likelihood of being exposed to dirt, blood or excretions, and
- Ways that a worker could be exposed.

Protective clothing/equipment must be made available for staff and training should be provided on cleaning of equipment and ways to prevent transmission of infection.

Management of Head Lice

Head lice are tiny insect parasites that live on the head and feed on the scalp (the skin covering your head). They reproduce by laying their eggs (nits) on the hair shaft (the part of your hair closest to the scalp). Head lice are not dangerous, do not carry diseases, and are not a sign of poor hygiene or cleanliness.

How do people get head lice?

Head lice are spread by head-to-head contact with another person who has head lice. This kind of contact includes doing group work at school, playing or hugging. Head lice can run from one head to another in seconds. Head lice cannot fly, jump or swim, but they can sometimes swing from one hair to another. Head lice are not spread through bed linen, clothing or head gear (hats and helmets) as they do not leave the scalp unless they are moving to another scalp, unless they are dead or dying.

Signs and symptoms

Adult lice are usually dark brown and about 2-3 mm long.

- Hatchlings (young lice) are often a lighter brown and about 1-2 mm long.
- Eggs will be attached to the hair shaft. They can be very tiny and hard to see, especially newly-laid eggs close to the scalp. They are grey white and about the size of a grain of salt.

Managing a client who has head lice

There is no regulation preventing a person who has head lice from using or attending a hairdressing salon.

Head lice are not considered a physical threat to staff or others if recommended practice standards are used. However, hairdressers are within their rights to refuse service as long as it is not on racial or ethnic grounds under the Equal Opportunities Act. Therefore a hairdresser is not committing an offence against this Act by refusing to perform a hairdressing service on a person with head lice.

Hairdressers should not be alarmed when faced with a case of head lice. It is important that the business owner develops their own policies and procedures on how to manage a client who presents with head lice.

Consider the following options for managing head lice:

- Should head lice be identified in a client, sensitively advise them on appropriate treatments and offer options based on the extent of infestation.
- Cut the client's hair and take additional precautions to prevent the spread of head lice to yourself and other clients. Precautions may include containing the hair in the cape used on the client. On completion of the haircut, fold the cape inwards and roll into a ball to contain any shed lice and take the cape to the cleaning area to dispose of the hair in a disposable rubbish bag. Clean equipment used on that client and wash hands thoroughly.

Alternatively, decline to cut the client's hair until they have treated their head lice. It is recommended the client is referred to the NSW Health website.

Treating Brushes, Combs and Scissors

The treatment for equipment used on clients with head lice is no different to the treatment of equipment used on clients without lice. This is because infections and infestations are not always detectable; therefore the equipment should always be treated as though a client has an infection.

It is important that any brushes, scissors or combs are cleaned and disinfected in hot water. Head lice are fragile insects, easily killed by water temperatures greater than 60°C for a minimum of 30 seconds (however this temperature is too hot for washing hair).

Cleaning Blood-Contaminated Equipment

It is important for an owner to establish procedures for responding if a client's skin has been cut (eg with scissors) and bleeding has occurred, and ensure staff know how to manage this. If equipment has come into contact with blood, it should be processed as follows:

Combs, brushes and rollers

- clean thoroughly using detergent and water as described in Section 5.1
- dry thoroughly, and
- disinfect the equipment by immersing in 70% alcohol or hospital grade disinfectant.
 - If using 70% alcohol there is no need to rinse.
 - If using hospital grade disinfectant rinse the items under hot water then dry, ensuring the manufacturer's instructions are followed for concentration and contact time.
 - Check the use-by date before using chemical disinfectants and discard any expired product.

Clippers

1. Use a brush to remove any collected hair from the clippers.
2. Dismantle clippers.
3. Any part that can be immersed in water should be cleaned using detergent and warm water and then dried.

4. Wipe over each part with a 70% alcohol preparation or immerse in a disinfectant solution as per manufacturer's instructions:

- If immersed in disinfectant rinse thoroughly under warm water, then dry.
- Parts not able to be immersed in water must be wiped over with 70% alcohol preparation and allowed to dry completely.

5. Reassemble clippers.

Cleaning the premises and fixtures

- spots or drops of blood or other small spills can easily be managed by wearing gloves and wiping the area immediately with paper towelling
- then clean the area with detergent and lukewarm water
- place any bloodied materials in two plastic bags, one inside the other (including the gloves used for cleaning) and discard into domestic waste
- wash hands after removing gloves.
- where cleaning is difficult such as between tiles and there is a possibility of bare skin contact with that surface, then a disinfectant (such as bleach) may be used after the surface has been cleaned with detergent and water.

Single Use Instruments

Cut throat razors

Cut throat razors, also known as straight razors, have a flick blade that folds back into the razor handle.

Cut throat razors with a non-changeable blade are not permitted for use in any commercial hairdressing establishment due to the risk of spreading blood-borne viruses such as hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV.

After use, micro-organisms and small, invisible quantities of blood and bodily fluids can remain on the razor blade. Washing and disinfecting the blade will not destroy these micro-organisms and will place other clients at risk of infection if the blade is reused.

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Cutthroat razors with disposable single use blades are permitted. A new disposable blade must be used for each client, and the detachable blade must be disposed of into an appropriate sharps container, refer to section 7.2 – Disposal of Sharps for further information.

The blade handle must be cleaned with lukewarm water and detergent to remove any contaminants before a new single use blade is attached.

Disposable Razors

Disposable razors must be **single use only** and disposed of into an appropriate sharps container after use.

If razors have a detachable blade, the blade must be disposed of into an appropriate sharps container, refer to the disposal of sharps section for further information.

The blade handle must be cleaned with lukewarm water and detergent to remove any contaminants prior to a new single use blade being attached.

7.0 – WASTE MANAGEMENT

Disposal of General Waste

General waste which includes used hair, tissues or gloves shall be:

- Disposed of into a lined waste bin with a tight fitting lid which is easily accessible during treatments.
- Stored and disposed of via normal refuse collection.

“Sharps such as razors must never be placed in general waste receptacles”.

Disposal of Sharps

The use of sharp devices exposes workers to the risk of injury and potential exposure to blood-borne infectious agents, including hepatitis B virus, hepatitis C virus and HIV.

Sharps include:

- razors
- blades and
- anything capable of cutting or penetrating the skin.

Sharps must be disposed of immediately after use into an appropriate sharps container.

Appropriate sharps container means:

For reusable sharps:

A sharps container that complies with AS/NZS 4261:1994 *Reusable containers for the collection of sharp items used in human and animal medical applications*, or for

For non-reusable sharps:

A container that complies with AS 4031:1992 *Non-reusable containers for the collection of sharp medical items used in health care areas*.

Sharps waste is classified as *“clinical and related waste”* under the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997*. Waste managers and operators who transport, store, treat and dispose of clinical and related waste should check the details of the Protection of the Environment Operations (Waste) Regulation 2014 for licensing and generic requirements in relation to clinical waste.

“Disposal of sharps into the general waste stream is dangerous and illegal”.

8.0 – DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF PREMISES

Careful planning is required before setting up a hairdressing business. It is important that the premise is fitted out with appropriate furniture and fittings, and designed to aid effective cleaning and reduce the spread of infections.

General Design

- The premises must be clean, hygienic and in good repair.
- Fixtures, fittings and equipment must be constructed of materials that are durable, smooth and impervious to moisture and capable of being easily cleaned (carpet and timber are not recommended).
- Adequate storage areas should be available to store equipment in a dry, clean and dust free environment.

“Construction standards for hairdressing premises outlined in the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 – Schedule 2 – Standards for Hairdressing Shops”.

Hand Wash Basins

- Each premises should have a separate hand wash basin designated for hand washing ONLY that is not used for cleaning equipment or washing of eating and drinking utensils available for use.
- Hand wash basins should be equipped with warm running potable water (not less than 40°C), single use towels, hand soap and be accessible at all times.
- Sinks used for cleaning equipment or kitchen sinks used for cleaning eating and drinking utensils must not be used for hand washing purposes.
- A hand wash basin located in a toilet is not suitable as the salon hand wash basin, as it may not be accessible by staff at all times.

Equipment Wash Sink

A separate sink with warm running water should be available for cleaning instruments and equipment washing.

Sink sizes should be large enough to allow immersion of the largest appliance/equipment to be cleaned.

“Hair wash basins should not be used for hand or equipment washing”.

Chemical Storage

Chemicals used on the premises should be stored:

- in a cool, dry and well-ventilated place
- out of reach of visitors
- preferably in a locked room or cabinet
- at or near ground level to minimise the possibility of chemicals being accidentally dropped or spilled.

For more information about the safe storage of chemicals please contact SafeWork NSW.

