



Protecting Worker Health

Reopening: Guidance for Hair and Nail Salons

Guidance Document

[aiha.org](https://www.aiha.org)

Small and medium (especially non-chain) hair and nail salons have been very challenged during the COVID-19 pandemic. They are viewed as “non-essential” by state governments and are mostly closed. 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 clients 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 clients 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.



- If all else fails, customer should provide his/her own pen to sign credit card authorization (salon should not provide writing instruments due to potential for cross-contamination). As a last resort, the salon could disinfect pens with a Barbicide® product.
- Since the 6-foot social distance guideline is not practical in hair and nail salons, consider installing a plastic partition between the employee and client to minimize facial contact. Include an open space large enough space at the bottom to accommodate working on the nails but maintains a physical facial barrier. At a minimum, employee should consider wearing a face shield.
- 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.
- Discontinue the use of any ceiling fans.
- Ensure restroom ventilation is under negative pressure with proper filtration.
- Consider consulting an expert in Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems to determine the maximum level of filtration can be installed safely and effectively (e.g, HEPA filters with the highest Minimum Efficiency Rating Value (MERV) rating allowable by the HVAC system without compromising functionality). See [ASHRAE](#) for more information. Ideally airflow should move vertically and not horizontally.
- Disinfect HVAC intakes and returns daily.

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. Wipe down / disinfect all cutting and other tools (e.g.,

Ventilation

- Ensure the salon is properly ventilated based on anticipated maximum capacity with proper filtration.



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).

- Smocks, towels, work clothing, etc. should be placed in plastic bags after each use and treated as potentially contaminated and laundered per recommendations below.
- At the time of the appointment, stylists should use a paper neck strip to help ensure proper hygiene with the client.

Restrooms

- Doors to multi-stall restrooms should be able to be opened and closed without touching handles, if 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.
- 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 in restrooms and disconnect or tape-off hand air dryers. Hand air dryers create air disturbance, making it possible for dust particles and germs to be inhaled.
- 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 hand sanitizer for clients to disinfect their hands completely.

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.
 - 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.

Personal Protective Equipment

- Require the use of gloves for all staff and ensure that the gloves are changed after each client. In addition, staff to wash their hands after each client.
- Require face coverings for all staff at all times. If possible, get n95 respirators for staff.
- Consider wearing face masks/shields.

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.
- Wear mask when out in public and maintain physical distancing.
- Wash your hands when you arrive at work, after each customer, after touching your mask and when you leave work.
- Wear mask at work at all times (homemade, surgical, N95 when available).
 - If you own an N95 mask that was unable to be donated, it would provide the most protection for you and those around you.
- 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 is being provided.
- 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** 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 mask, preferably the style that wraps behind the ears (otherwise, certain mask 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 mask 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 this guidance document about **reopening buildings after closures due to COVID-19**: https://aiha-assets.sfo2.digitaloceanspaces.com/AIHA/resources/Public-Resources/Recovering-FromCOVID-19BuildingClosures_GuidanceDocument.FINAL.pdf



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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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