



PUBLIC ADVOCATE FOR THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Letitia James

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Press Release

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Public Advocate Letitia James Releases Policy Report With Recommendations for Improving Nail Salon Safety

Report Finds Chemicals At Many Salons Potentially Harmful To Workers, Customers

(New York, NY) — On Monday, August 15, 2014, New York City Public Advocate Letitia James released a report on improving nail salon safety for both workers and customers. In New York City alone, it is estimated that there are 2,000 businesses licensed to practice nail care and design.

In recent years, greater attention has been given to the hazardous chemicals used at some nail salons, specifically those chemicals that could have a harmful effect on both nail salon workers and customers. Toluene, formaldehyde, and dibutyl phthalate— known as “the toxic trio”— are found in many nail products, though they have been linked with reproductive harm, respiratory problems, and cancer.

Generally, there is little-to-no information given to workers—many of whom are recent immigrants— regarding protecting themselves from the chemicals they may regularly come into contact with at nail salons. At least one report found that “the intensity of exposure for salon workers is 1,200 times what it would be for the average American”. **Out of the 10,000 chemicals contained in nail products, 89% of have *not* been tested by an independent agency for safety.**

New York City is not responsible for inspecting salons for cleanliness and safety— that power lies with New York State. And though there are almost 5,000 salons throughout New York State, there are only 27 inspectors statewide assigned to this important work.

The Public Advocate’s report— “*How Safe is Your Nail Salon?*”— is intended to provide recommendations to further protect the safety of nail salon employees and customers throughout New York City. It recommends a ‘healthy nails’ incentive program, increased education and multilingual outreach, and enhanced air quality measures among other things.

“New Yorkers deserve to know the salons they visit are safe, and salon employees must know that they have a right to information about the chemicals they’re handling, and how best to protect themselves. Today’s report is not meant to penalize these businesses, but rather outline how the industry can increase protections, and ensure that we create safer and more sanitary conditions in salons,” said **New York City Public Advocate Letitia James**.

The policy report is attached.

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