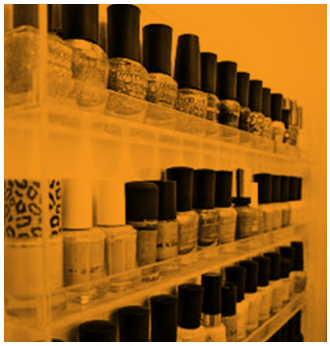

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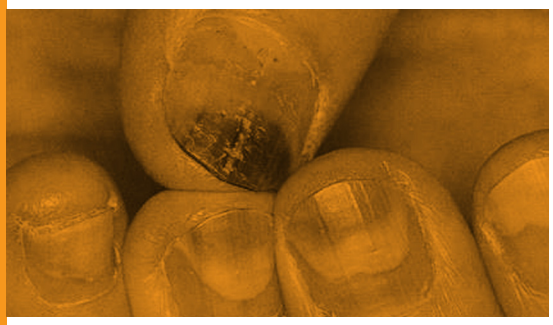


THE PUBLIC ADVOCATE
FOR THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Letitia James

POLICY REPORT:

HOW SAFE IS YOUR NAIL SALON?

New York City Public Advocate
Letitia James

SEPTEMBER 2014

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 3

INTRODUCTION 5

EMPLOYEE AND CUSTOMER HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES 7

CONSUMER SAFETY ISSUES 10

BEST PRACTICES IN OTHER CITIES 1 14

RECOMMENDATIONS 16

CONCLUSION 19

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 20

BEST PRACTICES FOR CONSUMERS 2 21

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Nail salons are a $7 billion industry in the United States. In New York City, it is estimated that there are 2,000 businesses licensed to practice nail specialty, and nail salons appear in every neighborhood, regardless of its demographics. The accessibility of salons has increased demand – and competition – for expedient and affordable nail services. But in recent years, possibly as a result of competition to keep costs down, the safety of salons has come into greater question. Reports of unsanitary conditions have surfaced and greater attention has been given to the hazardous chemicals used for common nail services and the negative health impacts those chemicals appear to have on some nail salon workers and tts. [1]

Over the past few years, several nail salon customers have filed lawsuits against nail salon owners for improper or inadequate sanitizing practices. Some customers have been left with infections as a result of these unclean conditions, some as serious as Hepatitis, which in some circumstances have turned deadly.[2] Reports of similar incidents resulting from unsanitary nail salons have occurred throughout the United States, leading the public to question the nail salon practices within their own communities. Currently, the City of New York is not responsible for inspecting salons for cleanliness and safety; nor is the City granted authority to inspect nail salons for purposes of health and safety because that power lies solely with the state. The New York State Department of State, which has just 27 total inspectors, is responsible for ensuring the health and safety of nearly 5,000 salons statewide.

While nail salon cleanliness is a concern, questions have also arisen about the safety of the chemicals used in providing nail salon services. Toluene, formaldehyde, and dibutyl phthalate – commonly referred to as "the toxic trio" – are found in nail products and have been linked with reproductive harm, respiratory problems and cancer. And yet, out of the 10,000 chemicals contained in nail products, 89 percent have not been tested by an independent agency for safety.[3] Due to increased exposure, workers are most at-risk.[4] The Environmental Working Group, a non-profit that conducts research and advocacy on issues of human and environmental health, pointed out that "the intensity of exposure for salon workers is 1,200 times what it would be for the average American."[5] The lack of education and information provided to the workers in these jobs increases that risk. In a 2004 survey of one hundred New York City nail salon employees conducted by the New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health and Empowering the Korean American Community, "37 percent said they often or sometimes had skin problems, 37 percent said they suffered from eye irritation, 57 percent from allergies, 66 percent from neck or back discomfort and 18 percent from asthma."[6] Despite the apparent link to human health, many salon employees lack the knowledge of the severity of the health risks associated with exposure to the chemicals in these products due to language barriers and lack of education.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (CONT'D)

As a result, many employees do not wear and/or are not provided protective gear in the workplace and risk exposing themselves to preventable diseases. Additionally, many employees, many of whom are recent immigrants, may be aware of the risks but may choose to silence their concerns for fear of retribution by employers.

Increased safety measures must be put in place to protect public health and safety. This report by the Office of New York City Public Advocate Letitia James is intended to introduce opportunities to protect the safety of nail salon employees and customers in New York City. Through an incentive program, increased education and multilingual outreach, stronger data, and enhanced air quality measures we can ensure safer and more sanitary conditions in salons.

Key Recommendations:

- **Establish "Healthy Nail Salons" Incentive Program**
- **Ensure Cleaner Air in Salons**
- **Citywide Nail Salon Safety Study**
- **Multilingual Health and Safety Information**
- **Ensure Employee Personal Protective Gear**
- **New York City Must Seek Authority to Designate City Nail Salon Inspectors**

INTRODUCTION

While the demand for nail care services continues to increase, the health and safety of nail salon customers and employees is of growing concern. Of the more than 10,000 chemicals found in nail products, only 11 percent have been evaluated by an independent entity for product safety.[7] As a result, the public lacks the knowledge of the potential short-term and long-term hazardous effects of exposure to the chemicals used for nail services. Individuals who have come into contact with these products are often prone to suffer ill health effects – ranging from skin irritation, dizziness, and allergies – to more serious diseases such as asthma. Since 2009, New York State legislators have proposed several bills to improve salon safety (A710; A743/S2043; A261), but none has been enacted into law. This report documents the need for improved health and safety within the nail salon industry by the City of New York and offers recommendations on how to protect public and employee health, while supporting businesses in the City.

Based on a 2013 study by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 13,100 nail salon technicians were found to be working in New York, making it the state with the second-highest number of people employed in this field.[8] In 2012, the nail industry provided approximately 87,000 jobs nationally and is expected to grow to 16 percent by 2022.[9] Among the population of nail salon employees, the majority are immigrant women from Asian countries who have Limited English Proficiency.[10] With such a significant percentage of non-native English speakers, it is critical that information on health and safety, as well as licensing exams, is provided in multiple languages.

INTRODUCTION (CONT'D)

INSPECTIONS IN NEW YORK CITY AND NEW YORK STATE

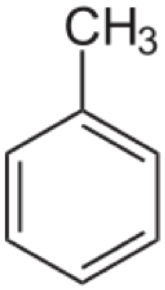
The Department of State's 27 salon inspectors are responsible for overseeing the licensing, complaints and inspections of all salons statewide. During the 2012 meeting of the New York State Appearance Enhancement Advisory Committee, it was reported that Department of State inspections over the last four years resulted in roughly 11 percent of inspected nail salons being cited for unlicensed businesses, about 13 percent were cited for unlicensed practitioners, 19 percent were cited for sanitary violations, 53 percent were cited for technical violations (i.e. posting, uncovered trashcan, etc.), and 20 percent were cited for no proof of insurance on premises. As a result of these citations, 56 percent of inspected businesses were referred for discipline.[11] For example, it was found that a customer acquired a Staphylococcus (staph) infection from a nail salon, demonstrating that not only were the technicians unlicensed, but they did not disinfect instruments. With nearly 5,000 salons with thousands of workers statewide, the state must increase staffing to support this public health need. Currently, the City of New York is not responsible for addressing health and safety in salons. Neither the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene or the Department of Consumer Affairs is mandated to regulate air quality, ensure cleanliness or promote safer practices for the public and consumers.

EMPLOYEE AND CUSTOMER HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES

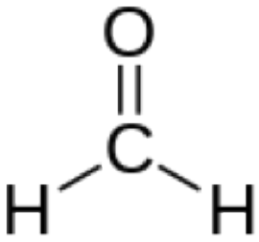
Many nail salon employees and customers lack awareness of specific chemicals in nail products, leaving them unprotected from potentially dangerous toxins. Additionally, health and safety procedures are not offered in multiple languages that would enable all nail technicians to read and understand the potential risks associated with repeated and significant exposure to these chemicals during nail procedures. Product manufacturers are required to provide salon owners with Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for each product containing one percent or more of a harmful toxin, or 0.1 percent or more of a chemical that may cause cancer.[12] These sheets are not generally translated into foreign languages and are not given to workers, and as a result employees are far less likely to understand the user safety guidelines for the chemicals they are working with.

THE TOXIC TRIO

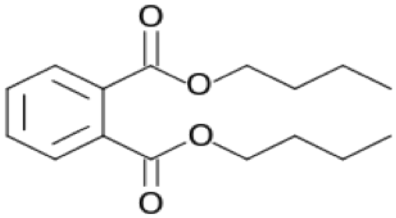
Many nail products contain hazardous chemicals that have the potential to lead to serious health issues. Among these chemicals, toluene (C_7H_8), formaldehyde (HCHO), and dibutyl phthalate ($C_{15}H_{22}O_4$) – better known as the toxic trio – are the three most common and dangerous ingredients of concern as they have been linked to reproductive harm and cancer.[13] These toxins are typically transmitted in one of three ways: 1) airborne; 2) product contact with skin or eyes; and 3) unintentionally transferring products onto uncovered food, drink or cigarettes.[14] A survey consisting of one hundred nail salon employees in New York City concluded that 57 percent developed an allergic reaction, 37 percent experienced pains from eye irritation, and 37 percent developed skin problems.[15]



Toluene



Formaldehyde



Dibutyl Phthalate

EMPLOYEE AND CUSTOMER HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES (CONT'D)

A study of 80 Vietnamese nail technicians from 20 different California nail salons demonstrated that participants were exposed to higher than the Environmental Protection Agency recommended levels of three solvents – toluene, ethyl acetate and isopropyl acetate.[16] One-third of survezyed workers reported headaches, nausea, breathing problems, and irritations once they began working in the salon. The most common complaint, reported by 26.5 percent of participants, was irritations of the nose, throat, lungs, skin and eyes.[17] Brand manufacturers such as China Glaze, OPI, and Revlon have already removed the toxic trio from their nail products.[18]

Potential Symptoms and Health Effects of Overexposure to Ingredients Used in Nail Care Products[16,17]

Ingredients	Usage	Symptoms of Overexposure
Camphor	Nail polish	Overexposure may cause irritation to eyes, skin, nose, mouth, and throat, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headache, dizziness, and in extreme cases of overexposure, uncontrollable muscle contractions
Dibutyl Phthalate	Nail polish, nail hardener	Overexposure may cause irritation to eyes, stomach, and upper respiratory system. Prolonged exposure to high concentrations may be hazardous to human reproduction and development
Ethyl Acetate	Nail polish, fingernail glue	Overexposure may cause irritation to eyes, skin, nose, mouth, and throat, skin rash, confusion and/or haziness
Formaldehyde	Nail polish, nail hardener	Difficulty breathing, including coughing, asthma-like attacks, and wheezing; allergic reactions; irritated eyes, skin, and throat – a known carcinogen.
Formalin**	Nail hardener	Overexposure may cause irritation to eyes, nose, skin, throat, and respiratory system, and wheezing. Prolonged exposure may cause asthma-like respiratory problems. Substance may be a carcinogen if inhaled in high concentrations or for long periods
Hydroquinone	Artificial nails	Overexposure may cause irritation and inflammation to eyes, irritation to skin, skin rash, and in more serious cases of overexposure, colored urine, nausea, dizziness, rapid breathing, muscle contraction, and central nervous system excitement
Toluene	Nail polish, fingernail glue	Overexposure may cause irritation to eyes and nose, weakness, exhaustion, confusion, inappropriate feelings of happiness, dizziness, headache, dilated pupils, runny eyes, anxiety, muscle fatigue, inability to sleep, feeling of numbness/tingling, skin rash, and in more serious cases of overexposure or intentional abuse, liver and kidney damage
Tosylamide Formaldehyde Resin (TFR Resin)	Nail hardener, nail polish	Overexposure may cause irritation to skin and skin rash

**The term formalin describes aqueous solutions, particularly those containing 37 to 50 percent formaldehyde and 6 to 15 percent alcohol stabilizer.

Employee and Customer Health and Safety Issues (CONT'D)

Nail technicians need better protection from the hazardous chemicals found in the products they use. Studies have indicated that 71 percent of employees never or rarely wear face masks, 46 percent never or rarely wear gloves, and 63 percent never or rarely wear protective eyewear. [21] Workers tend to work long hours, sometimes spending 10 hours or more per day in salons, and are exposed to high concentrations of these harmful chemicals during those long days. They are prone to endure serious damage to the body over time such as kidney, liver, or skin damage. Further complicating health and safety considerations, many workers in this field also lack health care coverage. For example, as reported by The New York Times, a nail salon worker in Jamaica, Queens experienced an unusual rash on her face while working with several different nail products at the salon where she was employed. Despite assurances from the salon owner that her reaction was just due to seasonal allergies, the employee went to a doctor and discovered that the rash was a result of contact with chemicals at work.[22] Without health insurance, the employee was forced to pay out-of-pocket to treat the condition. In 2007, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) conducted an investigation after a manicurist caught on fire and was critically injured at a nail salon in Hillsdale, New Jersey.[23] The investigation concluded that although the use of protective gear may not have prevented the fire, it could have minimized the amount of injuries she sustained.

Despite working in conditions that expose them to toxins, nail technicians in New York City only earn an average of $8.95 per hour, just slightly above minimum wage, and, as noted above, most employers do not provide health insurance.[24] According to advocacy groups, many of these employees can earn base salaries of approximately $35-$80 per day before tips. The competitive climate for nail salons leaves salon owners little room to raise the price of services. As a result, more employees work longer hours, increasing their exposure to potentially harmful chemicals and usually without lunch breaks or consideration for overtime work. [25]

CONSUMER SAFETY ISSUES

In addition to the serious health risks associated with nail products for nail technicians, nail salon customers are also vulnerable to the potentially harmful toxins found in salons. Apart from these risks, some common health-related complaints experienced by customers include infections such as asymptomatic Hepatitis, and other types of bacterial infections likely resulting from unsanitary conditions. Unfortunately, many complaints go unreported making it difficult to address these unsanitary conditions.

VENTILATION

Without a proper ventilation system, chemical levels often exceed 826 parts per million during the application of acrylics in nail salons. OSHA reported that with proper ventilation at employee workstations, chemical levels dropped below 12.4 parts per million. [26] Multiple studies have demonstrated that proper ventilation systems in nail salons have more positive health effects on workers and customers. Laboratory tests conducted by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) found that exhaust ventilation systems may help reduce chemical exposure by at least 50 percent.[27] Good ventilation can be obtained by installing a fan in the proper direction at each work station to disperse airborne chemicals away from employees and customers, opening windows, and continuously running the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system.

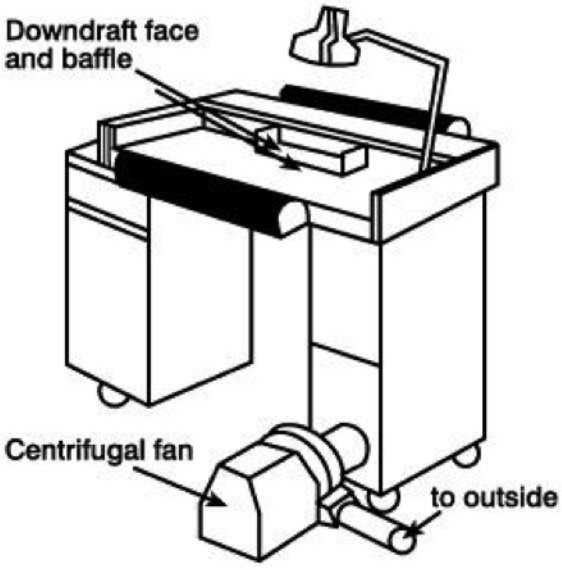


Photo Credit: Grainger

Photo Credit: Boston Public Health Commission – Ventilated Table

CONSUMER SAFETY ISSUES (CONT'D)

INFECTIONS

Salon customers may inadvertently be exposed to infections resulting from improper sterilization of nail equipment. Dr. Robert Spalding, a Tennessee based podiatrist and author of Death by Pedicure: Dirty Secrets of Nail Salons, reported that nearly 75 percent of nail salons in the country do not comply with their state's standards for disinfecting nail equipment. For example, staff in the Office of the Public Advocate observed several salons that reused nail files on different customers and did not adequately sanitize foot baths prior to performing pedicures. Additionally, the recommended process of properly sterilizing equipment involves washing tools with soap and warm water, using sterilizing solution on equipment for 10-15 minutes, and drying tools in a sterilizing machine.[28] Customers can be exposed to a variety of illnesses or infections if nail equipment is not properly disinfected after each use.

Footbaths used in nail salons contain a variety of bacteria that can cause a client to develop infections if not properly sterilized. Some reported infections from improperly sanitized footbaths include staph infections, Hepatitis, and/or bacterial infections.[29] The owner of one particular nail salon in California admitted to never cleaning out footbaths and researchers found skin remnants and large quantities of human hair in their pedicure baths.[30] Stories such as this and several outbreaks from pedicure footbaths led to ramped-up inspections of nail salons in California.[31]

Photo Credit: Pseudomonas. (n.d.). NAILS Magazine 2005

CONSUMER SAFETY ISSUES (CONT'D)

UV LAMPS

Several doctors studying nail salons have warned of the risk of skin cancer resulting from the use of ultraviolet (UV) lamps in nail salons, stating they can be as harmful as tannings beds. A study led by Dr. Lyndsay Shipp at Georgia Regents University found that although moderate use of UV lamps will not expose customers to a potentially cancer-causing amount of UV-A light, levels of UV light vary significantly depending on a lamp's wattage level and placement of the lamp in relation to a customer's hands. There was a variation in the amount of UV light radiated; higher-wattage lamps emitted the highest levels of UV radiation and the amount of exposure to the hands varied depending on the positioning of the equipment.[32]

Dr. Chris Adigun, Assistant Professor of Dermatology at New York University Langone Medical Center, stated that Dr. Shipp's study highlights the need to regulate the manufacture of nail lamps, noting that "there is little to no regulation on the manufacturing of these nail lamps."[33] Although the risk of skin cancer from these UV lamps is relatively low, there is no way of knowing how much UV-A light a client's skin is exposed to upon each manicure. Dr. Adigun also surmised that numerous reports of non-melanoma skin cancers on the hands that could result from UV lamp exposure from manicures.[34] In order to reduce the risk even further, customers should practice safety precautions such as wearing protective gloves or sunscreen.

Photo Credit: Allure.com

CONSUMER SAFETY ISSUES (CONT'D)

PREGNANT WOMEN AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Women working in nail salons who are of reproductive age may be disproportionately impacted by workplace toxins. Although the amount of exposure can increase over time, the risk of contact with hazardous chemicals varies by salon.[35] Symptoms of heightened exposure to the toxic trio can range from low-level symptoms such as headaches, fatigue, or dizziness, to high-level symptoms such as kidney, liver or birth defects for women working or visiting a nail salon.[36] Dibutyl phthalate (DBP) and toluene are particularly harmful for pregnant women as they have the potential to cause reproductive harm, including birth defects.[37] A North Carolina study found an increase in spontaneous abortions among cosmetologists working with chemicals, including formaldehyde.[38] Clients are less likely to encounter these severe symptoms because their exposure is less than that of a worker. Thus, technicians have a higher risk of contracting these symptoms if they are not using these products carefully. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has authority to regulate cosmetic products, yet these hazardous products remain available because they have been deemed "safe when used as directed."[39]

BEST PRACTICES IN OTHER CITIES

Although agencies like the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) have crafted occupational health and safety standards, they lack the power to enforce those standards.[40] The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) generally establishes the permissible exposure limits (PELs) of toxins exposed in the air, these limits were not primarily focused on protecting nail salon workers.[41] Other cities have already started the journey towards safer nail salons and the City of New York must follow suit and implement a program that emulates these best practices.

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

As the first city in the country to pass the Healthy Nail Salon Recognition Program (Ordinance N 269-10) in 2012, San Francisco has made strides towards improving the health and safety of nail salons in the community. In partnership with the California Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative, this voluntary program allows compliant nail salons to be recognized as 'healthy nail salons.' Currently, 17 of the roughly 250 nail salons in the city are recognized as healthy nail salons.[42] Most of the workers are Vietnamese so the program offers free training in both English and Vietnamese. Santa Monica, Santa Cruz, and Alameda County soon followed suit and implemented similar programs in July 2013.[43]

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

In 2011, the City of Boston's Board of Health enacted a proposal that enabled the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) to regulate nail salons in the city. The resulting regulations are intended to "standardize the practice of professional nail enhancement in order to protect the health of nail technicians, clients, and visitors of nail salons from the risk of injury or infection due to unsanitary conditions and exposure to hazardous chemicals."[44] With this new proposal, the BPHC has the authority to require nail salons to apply for permits and be subjected to regular health inspections. Additionally, the BPHC has the power to shut down any salon that doesn't meet the inspection criteria.[45] The fear of getting closed down has forced Boston nail salons to change their habits and incorporate healthier practices.

BEST PRACTICES IN OTHER CITIES (CONT'D)

WHITE HOUSE INITIATIVE ON ASIAN AMERICANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS (WHIAAPI)

Led by Executive Director Kiran Ahuja, the WHIAAPI focuses on improving the quality of life for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.[46] An interagency working group on health and safety of nail salon workers was developed as a result of the unsafe levels of chemicals such as methyl methacrylate – a compound banned by the federal Food and Drug Administration – that researchers found in nail salons.[47] The initiative is planning to convene with other national, state and local agencies in November 2014 to address the environmental risks for nail salon workers and identify opportunities to advance solutions that lead to safer salons.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Too many nail salon employees and customers are unaware of the health hazards associated with nail products, leaving them at risk for adverse health effects. While there is a lack of hard data detailing the issues faced by workers and consumers within New York City, it is necessary for the City to begin implementing measures to create a safer environment as the Department of State is not equipped to adequately ensure salon safety with just 27 inspectors. In order to increase the health and safety within nail salons, the Public Advocate recommends the following:

ESTABLISH A "HEALTHY NAIL SALONS" INCENTIVE PROGRAM

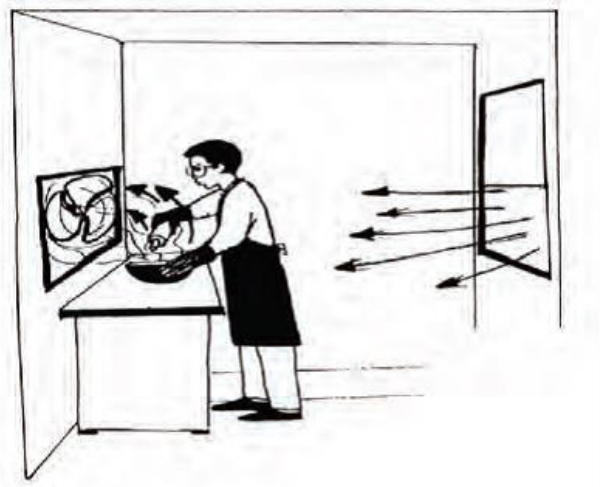
The City's Department of Health should establish "Healthy Nail Salons," a point-based and one-time grant incentive program to encourage salons to promote healthier standards for employees and customers, and to reduce or eliminate the use of products with potentially harmful chemicals and air pollutants. The Office of Public Advocate recommends that the City should provide eligible businesses with a $500 grant. The grant should be used towards ventilation expenses upon completion of a health and safety program, proof of program implementation and have no substantiated claims of wage theft and/or OSHA violations at the time of designation in the program. San Francisco offers a "green seal" as an incentive to salons that voluntarily comply with the use of nail polishes that are free of hazardous chemicals such as the toxic trio.[48] The program is designed to offer the roughly 200 nail salons in the city to qualify for the "green seal" sticker decals to place in their front window if they successfully phase out the products containing harmful toxins to create a healthier environment.[49] Similar to the best practices found in California, this proposed program would provide nail salon owners with the opportunity to be acknowledged for conforming to healthier standards. The goal of this point-based program is to support businesses that place a high priority on customer and employee health and safety and help the public to make more informed decisions about where they go for nail services.

Ensure Cleaner Air in Salons

Nail salon owners must improve air quality and reduce the amount of toxins circulating in their nail salons by utilizing proper ventilation methods (i.e. opening windows and doors, utilizing the HVAC system, installing table fans). Workers have expressed concerns about the chemical odors but continue working in these conditions because they need to make a living.[50] Following the best practices observed from existing research in California and Boston, ventilation systems such as operating table fans and opening windows in all nail salons will reduce the amount of toxins floating throughout salons.

RECOMMENDATIONS (CONT'D)

Bad ventilation: Outside air from the open window blows the chemicals into the worker's face before being vented out of the salon. (OSHA)



Good ventilation: Outside air from the open window blows the chemicals away from the worker's face before being vented out of the salon. (OSHA)

Photo Credits: OSHA, Stay Healthy and Safe While Giving Manicures and Pedicures (n.d.) A Guide for Nail Salon Workers, Retrieved July 9, 2014, from https://www.osha.gov/Publications/3542nail-salon-workers-guide.pdf.

CITYWIDE NAIL SALON SAFETY STUDY

The City's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene should conduct a cohort study, which may be done in partnership with not-for-profit organizations that advocate for the interests of improved nail salon safety to 1) document the health problems experienced by nail salon employees that could be attributed to such employees' work in a nail salon and 2) use of personal protective equipment by nail salon employees and customers. The study should examine the best practices of nail salons, as well as provide further insight on additional issues faced by salon workers and consumers and recommendations for improving health and safety in nail salons in the City. For example, the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) in California reported that brand manufacturers had falsely labeled their products claiming to be free of the toxic trio.[51] This cohort study is essential to ensure that these same issues are not present in New York City. By analyzing the general safety of nail salons in New York, we can determine additional measures needed to improve the conditions.

MULTILINGUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY INFORMATION

The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene must provide salon owners with multilingual resources to educate themselves and employees about healthier practices at nail salons. Not only will this assist in protecting the health and safety of employees, but it will also reduce the risk to customers and promote public health, particularly on women's reproductive health.

RECOMMENDATIONS (CONT'D)

ENSURE EMPLOYEE PERSONAL PROTECTIVE GEAR

Since many employees lack access to healthcare coverage, the use of protective gear (i.e. gloves, goggles, face masks) can reduce the amount of hospital visits resulting from work-related injuries and conditions. It is recommended that nail salon owners in New York City provide employees with the necessary protective gear to protect the safety of workers. Owners must commit to providing disposable protective gear in order to minimize exposure.

NEW YORK CITY MUST SEEK AUTHORITY TO DESIGNATE CITY NAIL SALON INSPECTORS

A salon must meet all the licensing requirements in order to remain operational, yet many function under the radar due to the lack of sufficient State inspectors to cover the estimated 2,000 nail salons throughout the City. The City is unable to regulate nail salons due to preemption with State law. The addition and/or designation of City inspectors will help to identify existing workplace and consumer violations, as more salons will be subject to random audits. While this recommendation will require additional funding and state approval, a truly effective enforcement mechanism is essential to improving conditions.

CONCLUSION

As the general public becomes more aware of safety concerns associated with nail salons, it is important for the City of New York to make changes to ensure the health and welfare of nail salon employees and customers. New York City must be a leader to work towards a ban on the use of nail products containing harmful chemicals in salons. Eliminating the use of the toxic trio in salons reduces the risk of inhalation of harmful toxins that have the potential to cause chronic and reproductive harm in nail salons. The European Union (EU) has already banned the use of DBP in nail products and has set regulations to limit the use of toluene and formaldehyde. [52]

Instead of the existing self-regulation practices within the nail salon industry, the City should step in by implementing better education and outreach and more meaningful regulations to guide salons toward better practices. Although many harmful chemicals can be found in nail products, the chemical exposures of these products can be controlled. Employees performing manicures over workstations are directly exposed to chemicals in products because the station is below their breathing zone. Proper ventilation systems such as table fans at each station can help reduce the adverse effects of this contact. Nail technicians are less likely to experience prolonged exposure to carcinogens if the above recommendations are applied.

It is important that consumers are mindful and protect themselves from the potential health hazards that exist in their nail salons. By implementing these recommendations, the City can see improvements within the industry and we can ensure that both nail technicians and consumers will not be exposed to the harmful effects of these chemicals.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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BEST PRACTICES FOR CONSUMERS

1. Be aware! Prior to receiving services, observe the salon for cleanliness. If the appearance of the salon seems to be unsanitary, find another salon.
2. Licensing:
    a. Make sure establishment has a license that is visible to the consumer.

3. Make sure the pedicure stations are clean before placing your feet in the basin. Skin and hair remnants found in footbaths can lead to infection if not washed out correctly.

4. If you notice strong chemical smells in the establishment, find another salon.

5. If you notice that nail technicians are reusing the nail tools that were used on previous clients, request for new tools to be used on you.
    a. Nail technicians should not pull tools out of their pockets. If they intend to use them on you, they should be properly sterilized first.
    b. Disposable items such as towels, cotton, sponge applicators and nail files should only be used once.

6. Inform the nail technician of any health ailments prior to receiving services.

7. For your health and safety, do not shave or wax for at least 24 hours before or after receiving pedicure service.

8. If you have an open wound on your legs, feet, or hands, do not receive nail services.

9. In order to prevent further exposure to toxins, do not eat or drink in the salon.

10. You should not be feeling any pain or discomfort while receiving services. Seek a health care professional if you experience any inflammation or pain around the nail.

11. To file a complaint for any misconduct, contact the Department of State at (212) 417-5747 or visit the Department website at www.dos.ny.gov and complete the form.

12. Encourage workers to use protective equipment.

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