

Health & Sanitation Standards

The following standards have been gathered from many mandated cosmetology board, companies and agencies that support the salon and spa industry to adopt and maintain practices to have a safe and healthy environment. This information is also to be used as a study guide for your team and we have created a test (*see Health & Sanitation Test*) that you can administer with your team to support everyone operating to specifications.

Sanitize – Disinfect – Sterilize

Sanitation

We sanitize in order to make a surface, our hands, a tool, etcetera, clean and safe for use. Sanitation is an absolute necessity. When we sanitize, we kill the single-cell microorganisms we call bacteria. There are trillions of bacteria, and not all are bad. Non-pathogenic bacteria are harmless and beneficial, but pathogenic bacteria are harmful and can cause infection. For this reason, a clean working environment is imperative, as is following sanitation requirements learned in beauty school, such as washing hands and fingernails with an antibacterial soap. Keep in mind that sanitation will not destroy all spores and viruses, which is where heavy duty disinfecting and sterilizing come in.

To make our hands sanitary we need to wash them for 20 seconds with soap (preferably antibacterial) and water as hot as can be comfortably tolerated. How long is 20 seconds? Remember the ABC song from your childhood? Sing it while you wash and you will clock in about 20 seconds (of course, if you sing it out loud people may look at you funny when you come out of the bathroom!)

Disinfection

To disinfect something is to render it free from pathogenic organisms or to make them inert. That is, to kill the germs and bacteria or to render them harmless. To keep you and your client safe, any item that touches a customer must be disinfected before it can be used on any other customer. Most disinfectors kill 99.99% of germs within 30 seconds. When you disinfect you are removing potentially harmful bacteria that might not be visible to the naked eye. You can disinfect tools by soaking them in alcohol, quats, or a phenol compound such as Barbicide for at least ten minutes (see recommended instructions for products used). Most disinfection solutions are weakened or rendered inactive by contamination of organic material such as skin or nail dust. They should be replaced daily or according to manufacturer's directions. We also recommend disinfecting tables, handles, magnifier lamps, doorknobs, sinks and dispensers between clients.

Sterilization

Sterilization is the removal of all microorganisms and other pathogens from a surface or object by subjecting it to high heat or pressure such as an autoclave. When we sterilize, we completely eliminate microbial viability, killing all non-pathogenic and pathogenic spores, fungi and viruses. In the salon, sterilization is not really necessary. This process is only required on instruments entering the body cavity. This procedure is normally used in the medical and dental field. Some salons, however, do use heat or pressure to sterilize metal instruments. For sterilizing purposes, I recommend an autoclave, and for smaller spaces a glass bead sterilizer. Always sterilize areas

that come into contact with blood or other bodily fluids. Instruments and tools such as tweezers and scissors should be stored in a covered container after being sterilized until you're ready to use them.

Did You Know?

- Cleaning all tools, implements and or equipment must be disinfected by complete saturation or immersion (enough solution to cover all surfaces of the item) for 10 minutes in an EPA-registered, hospital grade disinfectant that is bactericidal, virucidal, fungicidal, and pseudomonacidal. The disinfecting solution must be changed daily and/or prepared according to manufacturer's directions
- All tools, implements, or equipment that come in contact with blood or body fluids must be disinfected by complete immersion for a minimum of 10 minutes in an EPA-registered disinfectant that is effective against HIV-1 and Human Hepatitis B Virus, or tuberculocidal that is prepared and used according to the manufacturer's directions. Autoclave is an acceptable method of sterilization
- Autoclave is a strong, heated container used for chemical reactions and other processes using high pressures and temperatures. It is an acceptable method of sterilization.
- All disinfected tools and implements shall be stored in a sanitary manner in a covered container. The container must be labeled to show that it contains disinfected tools and implements
- Soiled and dirty tools and implements must be stored in a separate and properly labeled covered container. Soiled and dirty tools and implements shall not be used again until thoroughly cleaned and disinfected
- Hand washing is required before and between providing services to each client. Anti-bacterial soap is recommended to sanitize the hands and the exposed portions of arms before providing services and after smoking, drinking, eating, and using restrooms
- Linens and towels should always be freshly laundered and never reused between clients. Even the haircut cape should never be placed directly against a client's skin without a protective barrier – either a paper strip, or a salon towel folded and draped around the neck, with the cape placed over that. If neither of these steps are taken, a freshly washed caped needs to be applied. Check with your state to see if neck strips are legal form of usage
- A consumer has the right to contact your state's board of cosmetology and register a complaint which the board will investigate (usually by sending an investigator undercover) to check whether the condition was an isolated occurrence or a genuine laxity in the sanitation protocols. Remember the board is there not only to serve the professionals, but to serve the protection of the public