

Welcome to the Hairdressing Module

Have you read the General Module, completed the test and printed your WorkSafe Smart Move General certificate?

The Hairdressing Module should be done **AFTER** the General Module

If it is some time since you have done the General module you should complete the Review Module. The test for this module contains some questions based on the Review Module.

There are common hazards that exist in the hairdressing industry. It is important to learn about these hazards and how to work safely.

Your employer must make sure your safety and health is not harmed in any way and you must look after your own safety and health and not put others at risk.

The Hairdressing Module contains information on:

- Hazardous Substances;
- Electricity;
- Slips, Trips and Falls;
- Fatigue; and
- Cash Handling and Opening and Closing Procedures.

Within the hairdressing industry you may be involved in a range of work activities on a daily basis such as using a wide variety of tools and electrical appliances, chemical products, talking to clients and carrying out cleaning duties.

In your daily work you may use scissors, styling rods and rollers, rubber caps, hair dryers, curling tongs, chemical solutions and treatments and cleaning equipment and products. You should be trained on how to use these tools, appliances and products and made aware of any potential hazards.

Hazardous Substances

In the hairdressing industry you may work daily with hazardous substances such as hair dyes, hair spray, perm solutions and cleaning products.

Dermatitis of the hands, latex sensitivity and breathing problems caused by breathing in fumes from sprays and solutions can be a problem in the hairdressing industry.

Your employer must make sure you use hazardous substances according to the manufacturers or supplier's written instructions (the Material Data Safety Sheet or MSDS) while you must follow the agreed safe work procedures for your workplace.

Key Point If you need more information on the substances that you are using, ask your supervisor or safety and health representative.



When handling perm solutions, dyes and cleaning products you should wear personal protective equipment to reduce the risk of harm to your health. Personal protective equipment and clothing used in the hairdressing industry includes gloves, protective hand creams and coveralls (aprons). Your employer should provide these items.

Hazardous Substances

Ventilation

A lack of ventilation is a hazard and can be a risk to the safety of hairdressers. Good ventilation should be provided to control fumes and odours from the hazardous substances used everyday in the hairdressing industry. Ventilation can be provided through windows that open, an air conditioning system or extraction fans.

Ventilation is also important for the control of heat and cold. For example, the use of hair dryers and other heating equipment can cause a build up of heat in the work area.

Contact Dermatitis

Contact Dermatitis is an inflammation that occurs when a substance comes into contact with skin. The skin is irritated and there is an abnormal (allergic) reaction. The skin may be red, swollen, tender, hot, painful or itchy. If the reaction is severe,

the skin may blister or weep and can become cracked or crusty.

The chemicals in hair dyes, sprays, perm solutions and cleaning detergents can cause skin irritation in some employees.

Key Point Your employer should provide protective gloves and barrier creams to reduce the risk of contact dermatitis and you should use them.

Different employees will react differently to each substance, and some may have no reaction at all. Some substances will cause pain or discomfort. Other substances could be used regularly for a long time before the skin begins to react.

In some cases employees will need long periods away from work or even may no longer be able to work in the hairdressing industry.

Hazardous Substances

Latex sensitivity

Hairdressers who use disposable gloves may also develop sensitivity to latex over a period of time.

Latex is used extensively in the manufacture of disposable gloves. Cornstarch powder is often used in latex gloves to make them easier to put on. Latex proteins are absorbed into the cornstarch powder. The powder then irritates the skin causing the allergic

reaction. When the gloves are removed the powder can be released into the air and may be inhaled.

Latex sensitivity usually leads to dry, raw skin most commonly on the hands. Severe allergic reactions can result in sustained dermatitis with blisters and respiratory symptoms.

Your employer may provide you with powder free, low allergen gloves to reduce the risk of a reaction to latex.

Electricity

Hairdressers use electrical appliances such as hair dryers and curling tongs in work areas where water may be present. It is important to remember that electricity and water do not mix.

Key Point Your employer must make sure that electrical equipment is in good working order and is regularly checked.

To reduce the risk of electric shock you should follow instructions, which may include remembering to:

- switch off appliances at the power point before you pull out the plug;
- disconnect broken appliances and do not use frayed cords or broken power points;
- avoid overloading the power points; and
- keep electrical cords off the floor.

Slips, Trips and Falls

In the hairdressing industry factors that may cause slips, trips or falls include:

- slippery surfaces (e.g. unswept hair, surfaces that are wet, polished or oily);
- the surface texture of the floor is unsuitable;
- foot-wear is not suitable and does not provide enough tread;
- moving from one surface to another and changing floor levels;
- equipment, tool trolleys and rubbish left in the way;
- steps and ladders used incorrectly;
- loose clothing caught on furniture or appliances;
- lighting is not bright enough;
- exposure to some chemical substances; and
- being hit by a moving or falling object.

Key Point Hair should be regularly swept up, spills cleaned up and care taken that trolleys and other equipment is not left in walk areas.

It is important that you wear appropriate footwear in the hairdressing industry. Low heeled comfortable shoes with closed toes and rubber soles reduce the risk of slips, trips and falls and back strain. You should check the condition of your shoes. Accidents may happen because your shoes are worn or there is no tread left on the bottom of your shoes.

Your employer should provide a suitable non slip floor surface and good lighting. In some workplaces floor surfaces can be chemically treated to increase traction and reduce the risk of slips and falls.

Fatigue

Hairdressers' work tasks often involve standing or bending over for long periods of time. There are some things you and your employer can do to reduce fatigue.

Where possible you should sit down for work tasks, preferably on an adjustable or ergonomically designed stool or chair.

If an adjustable chair is provided for the client, make sure you adjust it up or down so that you are not stooping or stretching to reach a client's hair.

It is important to take regular rest breaks. Your employer should allocate time for rests breaks and to vary tasks throughout the day, and also enough time for you to gradually get used to a new job.

Talk to your employer or supervisor if a stool or chair is not provided or you have difficulty in trying to handle too many demands at once.

Key Point Wearing low heeled, comfortable, covered shoes will help reduce fatigue.

Cash Handling and Opening and Closing Procedures

Cash handling

In a workplace where cash is handled you are more likely to face the threat of robbery or attack.

To reduce the risk of injury or harm, employers should have cash handling procedures and train you in these procedures.

Procedures should cover:

- removal of excess cash from the till to safe storage;
- not handling cash in front of customers; and
- delivery and deposit of money at the bank.

Key Point

You should be made aware of procedures for handling cash and opening and closing and you should follow them.

Opening and closing procedures

Your employer should have simple written procedures for opening and closing hairdressing salons. This is important if the salon is isolated or you have to open and close it when the employer or other employees are around. It is safer if more than one person opens or closes the salon.

Procedures should cover checking to make sure:

- there are no suspicious people or vehicles around before entering or leaving the workplace;
- no one has broken in – if there are signs of break in you should be aware what action to take;
- before leaving that the safe (if there is one) and all entries, exits and windows are securely locked; and
- there are no unauthorised persons remaining.

Now try the self-assessment questions
on the Internet at
www.docep.wa.gov.au

BEFORE you start the questions, it is important to type your name on the computer screen exactly as you want it to appear on your certificate.

There are 16 questions and if you get 12 or more correct you can print online a WorkSafe Smart Move Certificate signed by the Minister for Consumer and Employment Protection.