

HAIR SALONS AND BARBER SHOPS

Hair services include shampooing, cutting and styling of hair on a person's head and/or face. Some examples of styling are permanent or temporary hair colouring, a wet shave with a straight razor, weaves sewn into short braided hair and extensions attached to shorter hair on the scalp.

INFECTION RISKS

While the risk of infection from hairstyling is low, procedures that use a razor, scissors or other sharp instrument carry the risk of cutting a client. The open wound created by an accidental cut to a client's skin may allow the entry of disease-causing microorganisms. Infections can spread from:

- Contaminated and/or improperly reprocessed equipment
- Contaminated environment
- Client's own bacteria from different parts of the body
- Unclean hands touching the cut area

Barbering using a razor has been associated with bacterial infections such as skin infections caused by *Serratia marcescens* and viral infections such as hepatitis B virus, hepatitis C virus, or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Transmission of an infection of methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) onto a client's hairline through inadequately reprocessed hairdressing equipment has also been reported.

INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL REQUIREMENTS

Equipment:

Operators are to follow manufacturer's instructions for the dilution, preparation, use and replacement of disinfectant products provided in concentrated form, in order to ensure they are properly diluted and used.

- Reusable instruments and equipment (e.g., tweezers, crochet needles for highlights, combs, and handles for shaving razors with disposable blades) are to be properly cleaned and disinfected after use. Straight razors with a fixed blade (non-detachable from the handle) are not recommended
- Cloth towels are to be laundered or placed in designated receptacle for items awaiting laundering after each client
- Single-use items (e.g., paper neck strips) are to be discarded after use and are not to be reused
- Sharps (e.g., razor blades, needles/lancets used to expose ingrown hairs before shaving) are to be discarded in an approved sharps container after use

PUBLIC HEALTH

1-877-464-9675
TTY 1-866-512-6228
york.ca/BeSpaSafe

Operational Requirements:

- Operators are to check client's skin before performing a hairdressing/hair styling or shaving service. Services are not to be performed on a client if nearby skin (within 15 cm/6 inches) has a rash or is inflamed or infected. If this is not possible, service must be delayed until the area has healed
- If a client gets a nick or other injury that draws blood during the service, operators are to provide a client with appropriate first aid (e.g., application of antiseptic and an adhesive dressing) and to document the accidental exposure. Conduct appropriate disinfection of the equipment after injury (intermediate-level disinfection)
- If a styptic agent is applied to stop client bleeding, this must be dispensed in a manner that prevents the introduction and/or spread of disease-causing microorganisms. Styptic pencils are not recommended

Reprocessing Classification

High-Level Disinfection	Intermediate-Level Disinfection	Low-Level Disinfection	Single-Use, Disposable
• Tweezers used to expose ingrown hairs	• Tweezers used to remove hair from the hair follicle • Scissors used to cut hair ‡ • Crochet hooks for cap highlights ‡ • Hair clipper blades ‡ • Scissors used to cut hair ‡	• Tables, chairs, hair sinks • Combs, brushes • Reusable colour mixing bowls • Crochet hooks for cap highlights ‡ • Hair clipper blades ‡ • Hair clipper guards and shaver guards • Hair rollers, clips and caps • Hair scissors • Handles for hairstyling and shaving razors • Scissors used to cut hair ‡	• Applicator used to apply styptic agent to stop bleeding • Gloves • Hair threading or weaving needles • Neck strip • Single-use crochet hooks for cap highlights, and cap • Single-use disposable razors and/or blades • Styptic products • Eyebrow razors • Lancets and needles used to remove ingrown hairs*

* These items are to be sterile before use

‡ If the equipment only contacts intact skin, then an intermediate-level disinfectant may be used

SOURCES

1. Environmental Protection Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter E. 19
2. Health Protection and Promotion Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.H.7; O. Reg. 136/18: Personal Service Settings
3. Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). Guide to infection prevention and control in personal service settings. 3rd ed. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2019

This fact sheet was adapted with permission from CIPHI Ontario and is based on PSS best practice recommendations, current reprocessing standards and legislation. It is not an inclusive list of all requirements. Operators are responsible to ensure that all services are offered according to local requirements, best practices and legislation.