

Workplace Hazards in Hairdressing

This fact sheet is for students undertaking work experience programs, and for their host employers. It can be used as a tool to assist with task planning, and to develop appropriate induction, training and supervision to minimise any risk to students while they are 'at work'.

Students must be given instruction, and must be supervised at all times. Consideration must always be given to hazards when allocating tasks. If any risk exists, students must NOT undertake the activity.

Hazard	Possible Harmful Effects	Possible Employer Action to Prevent Injury / Illness	Preventative Action Students Can Take
Hazardous substances (chemicals)	Chemicals (in hair dyes, sprays, perm solutions, artificial nails, detergents) may cause skin irritation or dermatitis Vapours or fumes may cause headaches and/or respiratory problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Obtain the least hazardous product for each task ◆ Ensure adequate ventilation ◆ Make sure safety information is on labels <i>and</i> Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) are provided ◆ Provide personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves and aprons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ When handling dyes, perm solutions and cleaning products you should wear disposable gloves to reduce health risks ◆ Read safety information on bottles and tubes and follow the recommended practices ◆ Clean up any spills immediately
Electricity	Appliances such as hair dryers and curling tongs are often used where water is present. Electric shock may occur if water contacts appliances or leads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide sufficient power points to avoid the use of double adaptors ◆ Ensure appliances are regularly inspected, tested and tagged ◆ Ensure appliances and leads can not come into contact with water ◆ Remove faulty appliances: tag DANGER - DO NOT USE until repaired or replaced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Switch off appliances at the power point before you pull out the plug ◆ Disconnect and report any faulty appliance ◆ Do not use frayed cords or damaged power points ◆ Do not overload power points (e.g. by using double adaptors)
Sharp objects – scissors, razors	Cuts and skin punctures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide training in safe use of scissors and razors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Use scissors and razors with care, and as instructed
Slippery floors	Slips and falls may result in broken bones, sprains and strains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide floor mats ◆ Provide non-slip shoes ◆ Provide bucket, mop, detergent for quick clean-up of liquid spills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Wear non-slip shoes ◆ Sweep up cut hair quickly ◆ Clean up spills quickly
Fatigue (standing for long periods)	Back, neck and shoulder pain, varicose veins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide ergonomic stools/chairs ◆ Provide floor mats ◆ Schedule regular rest breaks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Use ergonomic stools and chairs rather than standing for long periods ◆ Take rest breaks when scheduled
Contact with public	Abuse, assault, robbery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide adequate security ◆ Students must not be asked to handle money ◆ Arrange customer service <i>and</i> emergency response training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Follow procedures and instructions regarding security and contact with the public ◆ Report any concerns about public behaviour immediately
Manual handling (repetitive motions)	Overuse injuries including repetitive strain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Schedule regular breaks ◆ Assess manual handling tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Follow instructions and training ◆ Take breaks when scheduled
Sexual harassment, work place bullying	Emotional stress, fear and anxiety, physical illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Establish work place policy ◆ Provide staff briefings or training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Report any concerns immediately

