Hairdresser – Fact Sheets



WHAT DOES A HAIRDRESSER DO?

Hairdressers, aestheticians, spa workers, and barbers have similar functions when they work in a salon. They have to work with different clients from children to adults, and male to female. General tasks may include the following:

- Talk to clients about their requirements and provide advice on hair care.
- Shampoo, condition, and rinse hair.
- Cut hair using clippers, scissors, or razors.
- Provide services such as colouring, bleaching, applying treatment, permanent waving (with chemical solutions), straightening, and tinting.
- Dry hair and style it using brushes, combs, curling or straightening irons, and other equipment.
- Operate a cash register and computer.
- Perform reception duties such as answering telephone calls and making appointments.
- Sell retail products.
- Maintain client records.
- Clean the salon, work areas, and equipment.
- Supervise apprentices.
- Interact with customers who may be upset or angry (e.g., potential for harassment or bullying)
- Be aware of customer actions while on the premises (e.g., be alert to potential issues or acts of theft).

What are some health and safety issues for hairdressers?

There are several potential health and safety hazards associated with hairdresser’s duties, including:

Biological hazards

- Risk of contracting infectious diseases.

Chemical hazards

- Exposure to chemicals such as aerosols in hair care, solutions, cosmetic and cleaning products, including the risk of some products that may cause

cancer.
- Skin and respiratory disorders from allergenic or irritating materials.

Ergonomic hazards

- Standing for long hours.
- Working in awkward postures or performing repetitive tasks.
- Risk of pain or injury from lifting or carrying heavy loads. Repetitive strain injury.
- Fatigue and other health problems from long hours of work.

Physical hazards

- Noise due to equipment used, hair dryers, or people.

Psychological hazards

- Work in staggered shifts.
- Exposure to workplace violence.
- Stress.Hea

Safety hazards

- Risk of cuts, bruises or burns from scissors, hairdryers, chemicals and other equipment.
- Slips, trips and falls from wet and untidy floors, strayed wires and obstructed floors.
- Electrical hazards.
- Fire hazards.
- Inadequate lighting (e.g., glare, low levels, etc.) can cause workers to adopt awkward postures.

What are some preventive measures for a hairdresser?

Biological hazards

- Wash hands frequently to prevent infection. Moisturize your hands regularly.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- Wash hands regularly, especially before and after working with each client.
- Treat all body substances such as blood as potentially infectious – always wear gloves.

Chemical hazards

- Determine which products contain hazardous chemicals or ingredients and label them properly.
- Use a less harmful product where possible.
- Read manufacturer’s instructions on how to use products safely, including hair products, cleaners, etc.
- Avoid contact with products that contain known cancer-causing ingredients or sensitizers such as certain hair dyes.
- Train workers in WHMIS and safe handling of hazardous products.
- Safely store and dispose of products.
- Provide local exhaust ventilation where there is a risk of exposure to

hazardous fumes.

Ergonomic hazards

- Design the salon ergonomically:
    - Provide workbenches, reception desks, washbasins (for tasks such as cutting, styling, shampooing, etc.) at the right height, and adjustable stools and chairs for sitting.
    - Rearrange the work area so that the task, materials (shampoos, conditioners, dyes etc.), equipment (scissors, blow-dryers, etc.) and controls are within easy reach and do not require stretching or twisting.
- Take regular rest breaks and exercise.
- Rotate job functions to prevent overuse injuries.
- Rotate washing/basin duty (to avoid prolonged contact with water).
- Purchase scissors, blow-dryers, styling rods and rollers, gloves, etc., which are easy and safe to use.
- Store frequently used, heavy objects, and material between knee and shoulder height.

Psychological hazards

- Have good job design for a balanced workload.
- Treat all employees in a fair and respectful manner.
- Involve employees in decision-making and allow for their input directly or through committees, etc.
- Take steps to help others and positive mental health promotion.

Physical hazards

Purchase equipment that is quieter.

Install sound enclosures or use noise reducing surfaces (e.g., sound dampening materials).

Safety hazards

- Inspect tools and equipment and make sure they are in good condition.
- Read manufacturer’s instructions on how to use appliances safely.
- Make sure all sharp equipment is disposed of in a safe manner.
- Clean the floor at frequent intervals, and always as soon as there is a spill.
- Clean and disinfect all equipment after each use.
- Wear comfortable shoes with non-skid soles.
- Maintain proper lighting levels.
- Follow electrical safety measures
- Train workers on fire safety.
- Maintain a first-aid kit and have first aid training.

Personal Protective Equipment

- Wear personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves, aprons and eye protection.
- Make sure equipment such as gloves are made of the correct material for the

chemical or product you are working with. There is not one material that will protect from all types of chemicals or products.
- Wash immediately with water and soap after any skin contact with chemicals or products.

What are some good general safe work practices?

- Follow safety procedures for:
    - Hair products, equipment and tools.
    - Electrical safety.
    - Fire safety, including fire extinguishers.
    - Manual material handling/ lifting.
    - Workplace violence.
    - Good hygiene practices.
- Practice safe lifting techniques.
- Practice good housekeeping procedures.
- Use, maintain and store personal protective equipment as recommended by the manufacturer.
- Learn about chemical hazards, WHMIS and MSDSs.
- Learn how to clean equipment and tools properly.
- Know first aid.
- Follow company safety rules.
- Know how to report hazards to your employer.
- Know how to report injuries to your employer or the Workers’ Compensation Board

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