

salon safety guidelines for nail technicians

Editor's note: The Nail Manufacturers Council (now a part of the Professional Beauty Association) developed sanitation guidelines for nail professionals 10 years ago. Over the years, the salon industry and the standards have changed, so we update these guidelines every year. We thank NMC co-chairs Doug Schoon and Eric Schwartz for their review and input on these guidelines. From their recommendations, the original guidelines, and a va-

riety of other resources, we have compiled these Safety Guidelines into one document.

It's important to be aware that each state has its own regulations covering these areas. It's your legal responsibility to read, understand, and follow all of your state's rules and regulations, and keep up with any changes. Also, follow your product manufacturers' instructions for all products used in salons.

BASIC SALON SANITATION

1. Nail technicians should always clean both their hands and their clients' hands or feet before every service. Some states allow the use of waterless hand sanitizers, but if hands are dirty or contaminated, they should be washed with liquid soap and running water first. Cleaning hands reduces the risk of spreading germs from client to client.

2. All implements (including individual implements that a client brings in or that are left in the salon), equipment, and materials that come in contact with a client must be properly cleaned (sanitized) and disinfected prior to servicing each client. Before any tool or file can be used on a client, it must be properly cleaned and disinfected.

3. If any metal tool or hard piece of equipment has come into contact with blood, body fluid, infection, or an unhealthy condition, it must immediately be cleaned and disinfected (rather than continuing to use it on the same client). If a nail file or other porous item [See sidebar on porous and non-porous items.] comes into contact with blood, it must be disposed of immediately. (There may be local, state, or federal regulations regarding items that come into contact with blood.)

4. Store clean and disinfected tools in a clean container or lined drawer (labeled "disinfected") that is separate from soiled or used tools and files (so you never get confused and pick up a dirty implement).

5. There are very detailed guidelines related to the cleaning and upkeep of foot spas [See page 72, "Best Practices for Cleaning and Disinfecting Pedicure Equipment."] In addition to the disinfection protocol, you should keep records of the cleaning and disinfecting of foot spas.

6. Sanitation is an often-misunderstood term. Sanitizing means "cleaning to remove all visible residue or debris." Proper cleaning is the first step in safety, but it must be followed by disinfection, which involves describes the use of chemicals to destroy germs on non-living surfaces. Salon disinfectants include EPA-registered, hospital-level, liquid disinfectant products that are virucidal, bactericidal, and fungicidal; that are 10% bleach; or that are 70% or higher isopropyl or ethyl alcohol.

7. Use clean towels and/or manicure mats for each client.

8. Products such as creams, lotions, scrubs, paraffin wax, masks, and oils must always be used in a sanitary manner that prevents contamination. For example, paraffin and nail oils should not be applied with a brush (or spatula) that has touched the skin. To avoid product contamination:

- dispose of used or remaining product between clients.
- use single-use disposable implements to remove products from containers for application or remove product with a clean, disinfected spatula and put product into a disposable or disinfected service cup.
- use an applicator bottle or dropper to apply the product.

9. If blood or body fluid comes in contact with any salon surface, the nail professional should put on protective, disposable gloves and clean it with an EPA-registered, hospital liquid disinfectant or a 10% bleach solution. In case of an accidental cut, clean with an antiseptic and bandage the cut.



Find more detailed sanitation instructions **ONLINE:**

The latest release from the INTA and NMC, "Recommended Best Practices — Cleaning and Disinfecting Manicuring and Enhancement Equipment" can be found at www.nailsmag.com. Click on RESOURCES, then HANDOUTS.

PRODUCT SAFETY

1. Read and follow manufacturers' instructions for products used in the salon. Labels include information about how to use the product safely, expiration dates, safety precautions to be followed in case of a spill or reaction, and proper disposal. Also, be sure to follow local, state, and federal regulations for chemical disposal.

2. Have a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) on file in your salon for every product used in the salon that could cause injury or harm. MSDS include important information about reactions, spills, ingredients, and disposal of chemicals. Make certain that the information on the MSDS is read and understood by all salon workers. Most states require MSDS to be available upon request by an inspector, and a fine might be levied for salons that don't have them, so keep MSDS for all of your products in an easily accessible location. Many manufacturers have MSDS on their websites that can be easily downloaded.

3. Proper ventilation in nail salons is essential for client and worker safety and comfort. Make certain that your ventilation system provides fresh air intake as well as exhaustion of stale air. Air control in the salon reduces your exposure to airborne particles and bacteria as well as reduces your inhalation of product vapors, creating a healthier work environment.

4. Use a ventilation system that directs airborne debris (like filing dust) away from the breathing zone (the two foot square area between your mouth and nose and your work area) of you and your client. A mask can also be worn for further protection.

5. Use a metal trashcan with a lid (a self-closing trashcan is ideal) to reduce vapors from soiled material getting into the salon. This also reduces odor.

6. Smoking should never be permitted in a nail salon, nor should lighted candles be used anywhere nail products are used. Store all nail care chemicals in closed containers, always from any sources of heat or ignition.



To Dispose or Not?

There are two kinds of tools commonly used in the nail salon: non-porous (which can be disinfected and are generally reuseable) and porous (which are either one-use only [disposable] items or require specific cleaning protocol). Know what each implement you use is, as it directly affects your ability to comply with state laws and keep clients safe.

Porous items are made of cloth, wood, or other absorbent materials. Porous items include most nail files, orangewood sticks, cotton, paper mats, towels, and buffer blocks.

Porous items that are damaged or destroyed by cleaning or disinfection procedures are single-use items (disposable) and must be thrown away after one use.

- Porous items of any type (including those that say they can be disinfected) that are contaminated by blood, body fluid, broken skin (skin that is not intact), infections, or unhealthy conditions must be thrown in the trash.

- Porous items used on healthy nails can be cleaned by manually brushing and removing all visible debris after each use, then disinfected by immersing in 70% or higher isopropyl or ethyl alcohol or 10% bleach solution. (Some states permit spraying provided the surface is kept wet for one to five minutes.)

- Towels, chamois, buffing bits, and similar items can be cleaned in a washing machine with regular detergent at the end of each day.

Non-porous items are made of hard materials like metal, plastic, or glass, and include nippers, scissors, combs, metal or fiberglass-backed files, and drill bits.

- All non-porous tools can be (and must be) disinfected even if they do not contact blood or unhealthy conditions. These are all multi-use items.

- To clean a non-porous item, clean all visible debris then completely immerse the tool for 10 minutes in an EPA-registered disinfectant, bleach solution (1 part bleach to 9 parts water), or 70% or higher isopropyl or ethyl alcohol.

Other items that are not designed to touch skin, and are used in waterless products such as nail polish, acrylic monomer and powder, or light-cured gels, do not spread germs and do not need to be disinfected. Brushes that are used to remove debris from a foot spa, tub, or basin must be properly cleaned and disinfected between each use.

If you are not sure that a file or tool can be safely cleaned, disinfected, and used again, throw it out. Don't risk your business or your clients' safety to save a few pennies.

PROFESSIONALISM

1. Recommend that clients seek medical advice if they have any questionable nail conditions. Never be intimidated by a client who wants a service done against your professional recommendation. It's helpful if you have a professional referring relationship with a local dermatologist, internist, and podiatrist.
2. Inform your clients of their responsibility for proper nail care between salon visits. [NAILS Magazine's website has Client Handouts that can be downloaded and shared with clients. The topics range from how to care for their acrylic nails to how to deal with aging skin.]
3. Observe proper hygiene and grooming yourself, and maintain a professional attitude at all times.
4. Strive to obtain a minimum of 15 hours of continuing education annually from manufacturers and/or generic industry sources, regardless of whether it's required in your state.



What Nail Techs Need to Know About Disinfectants and Detergent Cleaners

You don't have to be a scientist to stay compliant on salon sanitation (although it seems like it). This is a simplified guideline for understanding the product claims and terms used with salon disinfectant products.

1) Any EPA-registered liquid disinfectants used in the salon must have these qualities:

- must have the words "bactericidal, fungicidal, and virucidal" and "hospital" on the label.
- must be mixed, used, stored, and disposed of according to manufacturer's label instructions. (It is against federal law to use an EPA-registered disinfectant contrary to its label.)
- must be prepared fresh every day and replaced immediately when the solution becomes visibly contaminated.
- are ineffective when proper cleaning is not performed before use.
- require complete immersion in the correct amount of disinfectant for 10 minutes after cleaning of all visible residue. Complete immersion means enough liquid to cover all surfaces of the item. Note: If the disinfectant manufacturer's label requires a different immersion time for soaking, you should always follow the label's instructions.
- spray disinfectants are for cleaning surfaces only and are not adequate for disinfecting tools and pedicure

equipment in the salon.

2) EPA-registered hospital "one-step" cleaner/disinfectants may be used for disinfecting pedicure equipment if:

- they are EPA-registered, hospital, bactericidal, fungicidal, and virucidal and have the words "one-step" on the label.
- tools and equipment are first cleaned of large amounts of residue.
- are used exactly as described by the manufacturer's instructions.

3) All bottles and containers (other than the original manufacturer's container) containing any disinfectant must be properly labeled, listing the contents, percentage solution (concentration), and date of mixing.

4) Chelating surfactant detergents (this is a type of cleaner recommended for pedicure spa units) break down residue from pedicure products and are effective in hard water. Hard water contains calcium and magnesium ions, which can inactivate disinfectants and create residue films that are difficult for ordinary detergents to remove.

5) You must record the time of each cleaning procedure in the salon pedicure cleaning log. Keep a log available to show clients. It demonstrates that you regularly clean and disinfect your pedicure equipment to ensure the customer is protected. Read and follow the instructions provided with the pedicure equipment to ensure proper use.

NEXT:

Best Practices for Cleaning and Disinfecting Pedicure Equipment