

PROTECTING WORKERS

from COVID-19

NAIL SALON WORKERS



What hazards do nail salon workers face in this pandemic?

Nail salon workers face new hazards in this pandemic: the virus, stressed clients, sometimes longer hours, and increased use of cleaning and disinfecting chemicals — which are sometimes used incorrectly and without attention to their hazards. Nail salon workers need protection from new and existing hazards and special protection from the virus.

How should nail salon workers be protected?

Employers are responsible for workers' health and safety. They need **pandemic health and safety plans** that spell out effective policies and procedures to reduce the chance of workers getting sick, and to prevent or reduce other hazards. Employers should develop the plan with input and feedback from workers and post it in the salon where workers can read it. The plan should include the following effective measures:

1. Keep sick people out of the workplace

Sick people should **not** be at work. The employer's policies need to ensure:

- ✓ there are no incentives or pressures to come to work
- ✓ paid and flexible leave/benefits are available
- ✓ workers who are more likely to get sick, or are pregnant, can stay home without losing pay or seniority
- ✓ there is no retaliation or penalty for reporting symptoms, or taking sick leave
- ✓ turning away people who may be ill (e.g., screen with a questionnaire when booking an appointment and when clients arrive, offer new appointments without penalty)

2. Allow time for cleaning, precautions, and breaks

With all the changes and stressors related to the pandemic, nail salon workers need extra time to do their job and take precautions. Hand washing, cleaning, disinfecting and rest breaks also are essential. Allow 10 to 15 minutes for cleaning and disinfecting between appointments.

All staff need at least 12 hours off between shifts, for travel, rest and sleep.

HOW COVID-19 IS SPREAD



COVID-19 gets into the air when people carrying the virus sneeze, cough, shout, sing, and/or talk loudly. Sometimes it just takes sick people breathing in an enclosed space to spread the virus. The longer and closer we are to someone infected with the virus, the greater the possibility we will get it.

There are two main ways to catch COVID-19. The most common way is by inhaling infected particles in the air. The other is by touching contaminated surfaces and then touching your eyes, nose or mouth. The virus can stay in the air and on surfaces from a few hours to several days, depending on air movement and the surface material.

3. Increased physical distance for everyone

The distance between any person in the workplace should be at least two metres/6.5 feet from others, especially in an enclosed space. Ways to increase physical distance include:

- ✓ stagger times for staff to arrive, take breaks, leave, etc.
- ✓ reduce the number of staff and clients by 50%, depending on salon size (see box)

Salon Size	Total staff	Total with clients
Small (700 sq. ft.)	2 - 4	8
Medium (700 -1600 sq. ft.)	5 - 8	10 - 15
Large (1600+ sq. ft.)	12 - 14	15 - 22

- ✓ use every second station, if stations are less than two metres apart and cannot be moved
- ✓ re-arrange areas where staff gather (e.g., break/lunch rooms, supply rooms)
- ✓ remove non-essential furniture or objects to ensure staff can stay distanced from one another when they move about
- ✓ take staggered booked appointments only (no walk-ins), and no appointments for large groups
- ✓ ask clients to wait outside until staff are ready for them, and ask clients to remove and replace coats, etc. themselves
- ✓ control and monitor how many people enter the salon (e.g., have someone responsible, lock the door when at maximum numbers inside)
- ✓ ask clients to come alone, unless they need assistance (e.g., disabled person, child)
- ✓ provide visual clues about distances (e.g., tape, paint) around reception desks, work stations
- ✓ provide designated delivery areas and entrances
- ✓ create a one-way system through the salon to enter and leave, or a system to ensure clients do not enter and leave at the same time

To avoid or reduce **contact**, methods include:

- ✓ provide dedicated work areas, tools, equipment and products for each worker
- ✓ assign one technician to each work station, and ask clients to move between stations
- ✓ install plexiglass or sneeze guards at reception desks and other places where clients are close to staff (e.g., manicure stations)
- ✓ when there is a barrier at a work station, leave enough space for the client's hands/feet to slide through without requiring the technician to get into awkward positions
- ✓ restrict or stop services where workers are in close contact with clients for a long time, and clients cannot wear masks (e.g., restrict services to 45 - 60 minutes, no facial waxing)
- ✓ ask clients to limit what they bring into the salon to a mask, sandals (for pedicures), a phone, pen, and whatever they are using to pay (i.e., no purses, bags)
- ✓ remove product testers, magazines, toys, brochures, and other items clients may touch

- ✓ ask clients to point to products they want to purchase
- ✓ use pre-payment or touchless devices to pay, accept deliveries, etc.

Signs at the entry and in public and staff areas should explain the rules about distance and reduced contact, as well as cleaning and disinfecting practices. Signs should also clearly say that no one with symptoms is allowed in, and anyone who doesn't follow the rules will be refused service.

Keep track of clients' names and phone numbers for at least 21 days. If a salon worker, client or visitor gets the virus, public health authorities need to trace their contacts.

4. Improve ventilation

Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems should be set to take in all fresh air. Otherwise, recirculated air should go through high efficiency (MERV 13 or higher rating) filters. The relative humidity should be between 40% and 60%. Clean intakes and returns every day and change filters regularly.

If possible, open windows and doors and adjust the HVAC system so it works effectively in those conditions. Pedestal or other fans need to avoid blowing air from one person towards another. Portable high-efficiency (HEPA) filtration units also can be useful.

HVAC specialists can help figure out if systems are working properly. If the salon is in rented space, the building owner likely is responsible for providing good ventilation under health and safety laws, building codes or public health rules.

5. Clean more and disinfect when needed – with safer products

Cleaning and scrubbing with soap, water and cloths removes dirt and germs from surfaces. Soap breaks down the COVID-19 virus' protective coating. That inactivates the virus, stopping it from spreading.

Disinfecting is **not** always necessary. With thorough cleaning, disinfection is only needed in places where people may be sick with a virus or bacteria, and for high-touch spots in areas before people can wash their hands. When needed, use the least toxic disinfectants.

Clean:

- ✓ all surfaces, tools, and equipment before reopening
- ✓ reusable tools, equipment, and materials between clients
- ✓ touch pads after each use
- ✓ bathrooms, break rooms, the reception area, and high-touch surfaces every 2 - 3 hours (or less if they aren't used much)

In **bathrooms**, remove unnecessary items (e.g., decorations) so it's easier to clean and disinfect. Use paper towels, touchless faucets, soap, and turn off air dryers. Place a lined, no-touch garbage container by the door. Add a sign asking users to flush toilets with the lid down.

For more information about less toxic products, read "Safer Cleaning Practices for the Workplace" at mflohc.mb.ca/covid-19

6. Laundry

On-site laundry is best. Provide laundry containers in convenient spots for used towels, linens, smocks, aprons, reusable cleaning materials, and cloth masks, etc. Clean the empty containers thoroughly with soap and water.

When taking off work clothes, coverings, and masks, or moving towels and linens, handle as little as possible, with no shaking. Wash in the warmest water possible with regular detergent and dry thoroughly.

7. Have the right personal protective equipment (PPE) and face coverings

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is the last resort to deal with hazards. Still, it is essential in a pandemic. All PPE must be right for the job and fit the person, especially women and racialised people. PPE should not be shared.

Employers must supply PPE. Start with good nitrile gloves. Without effective ventilation, workers need respirators when using toxic products (e.g., during cleaning and disinfecting). Respirators must be fitted and tested for each person who wears one.

Surgical or cloth masks are **not PPE** because they do not protect the person wearing them. They protect others if the wearer has the virus. They must fit over the nose and mouth. Face coverings with nose clips are more likely to fit, especially if the person wears glasses. Plastic reusable face shields can be useful extras – worn with respirators or face coverings – for close contact services. Wash with soap and water.

Change disposable gloves frequently. Take them off before eating, using the bathroom, touching your face, smoking, or when they are dirty. Workers need to be trained to remove them properly.



Have a lined garbage container for used gloves.

Aprons, long-sleeved gowns, or smocks can be worn over street clothing or uniforms. Put them in the laundry at the end of the day/shift.



If there's a problem with any PPE or face coverings – or if they're not provided – immediately talk to a supervisor and make sure to document it.

8. Hand washing for staff and clients

Hand washing with soap and water is an effective way to avoid getting the virus onto surfaces or accidentally into your body. Hand sanitizers are **not** as effective. Gloves are not a substitute either.



Nail salon workers need easy access to bathrooms with warm running water, and good supplies of soap and paper towels, so they can wash their hands:

- ✓ when they come to, and leave, work
- ✓ before and after each client, breaks, eating, and using the toilet
- ✓ before putting on and after taking off PPE (especially respirators and gloves) and face coverings
- ✓ after blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing
- ✓ after touching delivery items, cash or credit cards, and used towels, clothing, tools and equipment

Make it mandatory that clients wash their hands as soon as they enter the salon and between stations at a hand washing station or with hand sanitizers (60-80% ethanol/ethyl alcohol or 60-75% isopropyl alcohol/isopropanol). No-touch dispensers are best.

If workers use sanitizers that don't include hand lotion, they also need separate water-based hand lotion – without fragrances – to avoid chapping/dry skin from frequent use.

INFORMATION AND TRAINING ARE ESSENTIAL

Employers must give all workers and supervisors information and training about possible job hazards, including the special hazards of COVID-19. During the pandemic, this information must include:

- ✓ the workplace pandemic plan
- ✓ signs and symptoms of the virus, along with information on reporting symptoms and taking sick leave
- ✓ training on hand washing and sanitizers
- ✓ training on new or changed tasks and procedures (e.g., cleaning, disinfecting), with related hazards and protections
- ✓ training on PPE – its purpose, limitations, and how to safely put it on and take it off
- ✓ procedures to de-escalate, report, and deal with all types of violence
- ✓ available community mental health resources

Information – including posters – should be easy to understand and provided in the workers' languages.

RESOURCES:

For resources and up-to-date information on Coronavirus (COVID-19) visit:

mflohc.mb.ca/covid-19



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