Nail Salon Fact Sheets



WHAT DOES A NAIL SALON TECHNICIAN DO?

Nail technicians provide manicures, pedicures, and various nail treatments based on clients' nail care needs and preferences. These trained professionals perform the manicures over the workstation or "nail table" with the client's hands or feet resting on the surface as they work.

Their general tasks may include the following:

- Talk to clients about their requirements and provide advice on proper nail care treatments.
- Provide manicures and pedicures, including cleaning, filing, applying artificial nails, removing old nail polish, and applying new polish.
- Providing hand and foot massages.
- Sanitize all nail instruments and equipment before each use.
- Make sure that work areas are kept clean and tidy.
- Perform reception duties such as answering telephone calls and making appointments.
- Operate a cash register and computer and sell retail products.
- Be aware of customer actions while on the premises (e.g., be alert to potential issues such as workplace violence or acts of theft).

What are health and safety issues for nail technicians?

Potential health and safety hazards associated with nail technician's duties, include:

Biological hazards

- Risk of exposure to blood and exposed fungal infections from infected clients, or instruments that have not been properly cleaned.
- Risk of biological hazards such as bacterial, fungi, viruses and other infectious agents such as hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

Chemical hazards

- Long-term and short-term exposure to high concentration of hazardous nail products such as polishes, strengtheners, removers, and artificial nail liquids. Exposure to products may be more significant if there is poor ventilation.
- Skin and respiratory disorders from allergenic or irritating products.

Ergonomic hazards

- Sitting for long hours.
- Working in awkward postures or performing repetitive tasks.
- Inadequate lighting (glare, low levels, etc.) can cause workers to adopt awkward postures.
- Repetitive strain injury.
- Fatigue and other health problems from long hours of work.
- Stress.

Physical hazards

- Noise from equipment or customers may be distracting, and in some cases very loud.

Psychosocial hazards

- Exposure to workplace violence.
- Working alone
- Stress

Safety hazards

- Electrical hazards
- Fire hazards
- Slips, Trips, and Fall

What are examples of hazardous products found in nail salon products and their health effects?

Nail products such as polishes, strengtheners, removers, and artificial nail liquids may contain ingredients which can be harmful to your health.

Main routes of exposures to chemicals include:

- Inhalation: breathing vapours, dusts, or mists from the products
- Contact: absorbs through your skin or gets into your eyes
- Ingestion: accidentally swallowing the product while eating, smoking or drinking.

Examples of hazardous ingredients include:

Table 1
Examples of Hazardous Ingredients

Product name	Health Effects
Acetone (nail polish remover)	Headaches, dizziness Irritated eyes, skin, and throat

Acetonitrile (finger glue remover)	**Irritated nose and throat Breathing problems Nausea and vomiting Weakness and exhaustion**
Butyl acetate (nail polish, nail polish remover)	**Headaches Irritated eyes, skin, nose, mouth, and throat**
Ethyl methacrylate (EMA) (artificial nail liquid)	**Asthma Irritated eyes, skin, nose, and mouth Difficulty concentrating**
Methyl methacrylate (MMA) (artificial nail products)	**Asthma Irritated eyes, skin, nose, and mouth Difficulty concentrating Loss of smell**
Phthalates (nail polish, sealant, top coat and base coat)	**Itchy eyes, nose and throat Linked to negative brain effects (difficult to remember or concentrate)**
Toluene (finger nail glue, nail polish and polish thinner)	**Can cause lightheadedness and nausea Linked to harm to unborn children (such as low birth weight or size, learning disabilities, or hearing loss.)**

What are some preventive measures for a nail salon?

Biological hazards

- Wash hands regularly especially before and after working with clients to prevent infection.
- Moisturize your hands regularly.
- Treat all body substances such as blood as potentially infectious – always wear gloves.
- Consider getting immunized against infectious diseases, such as influenza and hepatitis B.
- There may be situations where public health measures must be followed, such as during the covid-19 pandemic, stay at least 6 feet away from clients and coworkers when possible.

Chemical hazards

- Replace products with ingredients of concern with a less harmful product where

possible.
- Safely use, store, and dispose of products.
- Cap or close containers when not in use.
- Use a ventilated worktable or local exhaust ventilation where there is a risk of exposure to fumes from polishing, gluing, and disinfecting.
- The worktable should be a surface that will not absorb hazardous products, preferably a surface that can be easily wiped clean.
- Maintain good lighting levels.
- Know about the products you use. Educate and train workers in WHMIS and safe use, handling, and storage of hazardous products.
- Have safety data sheets readily available to workers.
- Read manufacturer's instructions on how to use appliances and products safely.
- Determine which products contain hazardous ingredients and make sure they are labelled correctly.

Ergonomics

- Use adjustable furniture and workstations where possible to help reduce the need for awkward body positions.
- Rearrange the work area so that the task, materials, equipment, and controls are within easy reach and do not require stretching or twisting
- Practice good manual material handling/ lifting.

Physical hazards

- Keep equipment in good working order to reduce the level of noise in the salon
- Consider how loud equipment may be when purchasing.

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.
- Have a plan to protect employees in the event of a robbery or other acts of violence.

Safety hazards

- Inspect tools and equipment and make sure they are in good condition.
- Clean and disinfect all equipment used with clients after each use.
- Store tools in ultraviolet (UV) sanitizing boxes.
- Make sure all sharp equipment is disposed of in a safe manner.
- Always keep the floor clean and dry.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.

Personal Protective equipment

- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), including appropriate respirators, masks, eye protection, and gloves.
- Treat all body substances such as blood and bodily fluids as potentially infectious – always wear clean gloves and dispose them safely after use.

What are some preventive measures for a nail salon?

Below are tips that will help nail salons improve the working conditions.

- Reduce exposures to hazardous products by purchasing alternative products and by using appropriate ventilation.
- Use appropriate respirators to protect employees from harmful gases, vapours, or dusts, as necessary.
- Use appropriate type of gloves. 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.
- Store products in small bottles with small openings and label them with the information from the manufacturer’s label.
- Use metal bins with tight, self-closing lids to keep the product that is on a soaked cotton ball from evaporating and entering the air.
- Use ergonomic furniture that is adjusted for each worker, such as adjustable manicure and pedicure chairs, and tools to reduce musculoskeletal hazards.
- Train employees on proper ergonomic postures during nail services.
- Do not provide nail services for a client who has signs of nail infection but rather advise the client to see their health care provider for assessment and treatment.
- Practice good hand hygiene before and after each client, before and after wearing gloves, and in between breaks in service.
- Ask clients to also wash their hands thoroughly and dry them before nail treatments.
- Pedicure blades (credo blades) should be used only once then discarded safely into an approved sharps container.
- Single-use tools such as pumice stones, toe separators, emery boards for nail filing should be used once and discarded or given to the client for personal use.
- Multi-use tools such as nail cutters, cuticle pusher, or cuticle nipper must be cleaned with soap and warm water using a scrub brush and then disinfected after each client.
- Avoid “double dipping” when using creams or oils. These items should be used in a way that prevents cross contamination.
- Record if there has been an incident involving blood or bodily fluid exposure and keep this record at the salon. Follow any requirements necessary for your jurisdiction.
- Follow electrical safety measures.
- Learn about fire safety, including fire extinguishers.
- Learn about chemical hazards, WHMIS and SDSs.
- 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 injury to the Workers’ Compensation Board.

Source: © Copyright 1997-2021 CCOHS