

COVID-19 Reopening Considerations for Hair and Nail Salons

While the COVID-19 pandemic has forced many organizations to close their doors for an extended period, states across the country have officially begun implementing reopening measures, allowing some employers to resume operations. However, as organizations prepare to open their doors once again, there are numerous factors to consider in order to preserve the health and safety of both employees and customers.

Specifically, hair and nail salon owners face unique challenges in minimizing the risks of reopening. After all, the nature of these organizations can make it extremely difficult to maintain social distancing measures, avoid person-to-person contact and keep high-touch surfaces clean—all of which contribute to the spread of COVID-19.

Review the following guidance to help keep your employees and customers safe as you resume operations and to ensure a successful salon reopening. Keep in mind that this guidance is general—depending on the location of your salon, you may need to account for additional state and local requirements or restrictions.

Employee Health and Safety

Before you can allow customers to enter your salon, it's crucial to implement workplace adjustments and procedures to ensure the health and safety of your staff. Consider these measures:

- Utilize routine communications to inform staff about the steps being taken to prevent COVID-19 exposure at your salon.
- Provide an adequate supply of paper towel, soap and hand sanitizer to allow staff to maintain proper hand hygiene.
- Offer tissues to ensure employees follow proper cough and sneeze etiquette, as well as no-touch trash bins for tissue disposal.
- Educate employees on the common symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g., fever, cough and shortness of breath). Tell them to stay home from work if they have any symptoms.
- Conduct a wellness check on employees each day to ensure they are healthy and safe to enter the salon. If employees answer “yes” to either of the following questions, send them home:
 - Have you or any person you've been in close contact with (e.g., family members) been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past 14 days?
 - Have you experienced any cold- or flu-like symptoms (e.g., fever, chills, cough, sore throat, headache, stuffy or runny nose, vomiting or diarrhea) in the past 72 hours?
- Provide employees with adequate personal protective equipment (PPE). At a glance, salon employees should use the following PPE:
 - Masks or face coverings
 - Gloves
 - Face shields or eye goggles
 - Smocks

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- Require employees to wash their hands after entering the salon, working with a customer, touching their mask or face covering, using the restroom and leaving the salon.
- Encourage staff to carry a towel with them at all times. Instruct them to use the towel to cover their nose and mouth if they get a sudden urge to sneeze or cough. After using the towel, require staff to wash their hands and face before returning to work.
- Train employees on the following topics:
 - How to safely put on, use, remove and store PPE
 - How to maintain proper hand hygiene and follow sneeze and cough etiquette
 - How to maintain social distancing guidelines
 - How to clean and disinfect surfaces, workstations, tools and equipment properly
 - How to enforce health and safety requirements with customers
 - How to recognize and report areas or practices that increase the risk of COVID-19 exposure
- Implement proper signage throughout the salon to remind staff of proper health and safety practices.
- Establish a process for reviewing employees' workplace health and safety concerns related to COVID-19 exposure and determining mitigation methods in a timely manner.
- Maintain a stocked supply of cleaning and disinfection products. Be sure to purchase products that meet Environmental Protection Agency criteria for use against COVID-19. Further, review all product labels, safety data sheets and manufacturer specifications to ensure proper storage and use.
- Designate specific staff members to be responsible for maintaining proper cleaning and disinfection practices.
- Clean dirty surfaces or equipment with soap and water or detergent before disinfecting them.
- Utilize a well-documented system to track how often cleaning and disinfection occurs. Increase cleaning and disinfection frequency for the entire salon, paying special attention to high-risk areas and items—including workstations, tools, equipment and restrooms.
- Have employees clean and disinfect the following salon tools, equipment and surfaces between each customer and at the beginning and end of each shift:
 - Salon chairs
 - Combs, brushes and scissors
 - Hair dryers, straighteners and curling irons
 - Shampoo, conditioner and any other hair product bottles or containers
 - Hair-washing stations and sinks
 - Mirrors and countertops
 - Nail polish containers and filing tools
- Never allow a customer to sit in a salon chair before it has been properly cleaned and disinfected. Consider designating employees to be responsible for identifying areas that are ready to be cleaned and disinfected.
 - Consider placing disposable covers on salon chairs to allow for quick and easy cleanup.

Cleaning and Disinfection Practices

Because your salon offers services that require person-to-person contact between staff and customers (e.g., hairstyling, manicures and pedicures) and possesses a wide range of surfaces that both customers and employees frequently touch, utilizing proper cleaning and disinfection measures is vital. Use these cleaning and disinfection best practices:

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- Provide each client with a disposable neck strip and clean cape before beginning a hairstyling service. Try to ensure a sufficient supply of capes to avoid reuse throughout the day. Have all used capes laundered at the end of each day.
- Consider making these changes to restrooms:
 - Allow for doors to multi-stall restrooms to be opened and closed without occupants touching the handles with their bare hands, if feasible. This could entail adding a foot pull or encouraging occupants to touch the door handle with a paper towel.
 - In single-occupancy restrooms, use proper signage and materials (e.g., paper towels and trash cans) to encourage occupants not to touch door handles. Restrict access to single-occupancy restrooms with a key to allow staff to monitor its use and disinfect it regularly.
 - Use signage to encourage occupants to close toilet lids before flushing and wash their hands before and after using the restroom.
 - Provide paper towels for drying hands and adequate trash bins. Prohibit the use of air dryers.
- Install numerous hand-washing stations throughout your salon. If this isn't possible at your salon, install numerous hand-sanitizing stations. Specifically, make sure you have these stations located at the entrance and exit of the salon. Implement signage encouraging employees and customers to use these stations frequently.
- Prevent staff from sharing any workplace tools or equipment. If employees must share any tools or equipment, establish proper cleaning and disinfecting procedures before and after each use.
- Ensure proper air ventilation throughout the salon. Be sure to clean HVAC systems regularly.
- Have employees place their towels, smocks and work clothing in a sealed plastic bag after each use, as if the materials are contaminated. Have these materials laundered by washing and drying on the highest temperature setting possible for the fabric. Ensure staff wear masks or face coverings when handling dirty laundry. If your salon does not provide laundry services, provide employees with instructions for safely washing and drying their materials at home.
- Use disposable equipment and tools instead of reusable ones when possible. Ensure adequate trash bins and bolster trash removal practices to accommodate extra waste.

Customer Health and Safety

There are several factors that you must consider to promote proper health and safety standards for your customers. First, it's important to reduce transmission risks. Follow these tips:

- Consider conducting a wellness check on customers, similar to that of your employees, to ensure they are healthy and safe to enter the salon. If customers answer "yes" to either of the following questions, do not let them enter the salon:
 - Have you or any person you've been in close contact with (e.g., family members) been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past 14 days?
 - Have you experienced any cold- or flu-like symptoms (e.g., fever, chills, cough, sore throat, headache, stuffy or runny nose, vomiting or diarrhea) in the past 72 hours?
- Limit the number of customers in the salon at any given time. Only allow customers that are getting their hair or nails done to be in the salon (as opposed to socializing). In addition, consider offering special hours for vulnerable customers only (e.g., older adults). Keep in mind that depending on the

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location of your salon, you may need to account for additional state and local restrictions regarding the number of customers allowed in the salon at a time. Be sure to comply with all applicable rules.

- Utilize an online reservation system for customers to make appointments. Do not allow walk-in appointments.
- Allow customers to check-in upon arrival to the salon via email or text. Send them an email or text when after completing all cleaning and disinfection procedures to let them know they can enter the salon for their appointment.
- Utilize contactless payment procedures. Discourage the use of cash and credit cards. If contactless payment procedures are not feasible, place a barrier or partition between customers and staff.
- Limit face-to-face interaction between staff and customers as much as possible. This might include having employees stand behind customers while providing hair services and placing a partition between employees and customers for nail services.
- Use floor markings and signage to enforce social distancing guidelines.
- Try to space salon workstations at least 6 feet apart. If this is not possible, consider having employees service customers at every other workstation. If possible, implement physical barriers to further separate salon workstations.
- Utilize an isolated area for delivery companies to drop off materials quickly and minimize their time in the salon.

In addition to these practices, it's also crucial to communicate the steps your organization is taking to protect customers and the rules that they need to follow to do their part via your website, email, social media and salon signage. Include the following information for customers in your communications:

- If you are sick or have any COVID-19 symptoms, stay home. If anyone in your household is sick, stay home as well.
- Reserve your salon appointment online. Walk-in appointments are not permitted. Stay outside the salon or in your personal vehicle until you are notified via email or text that you are permitted to enter the salon for your appointment.
- Minimize contact with employees and other customers as much as possible within the salon.
- Limit the items you touch in the salon to only those you intend to purchase.
- Wear a mask or face covering at all times within the salon. Wash or sanitize your hands before and after leaving the salon.
- If you get the urge to sneeze or cough, cover your nose and mouth with a tissue. Wash your face and hands before returning to your salon chair.
- Keep in mind that the salon has the right to refuse service to anyone that has COVID-19 symptoms or fails to follow salon guidelines.

Additional Considerations

Lastly, be sure to review your salon's operations and make any additional adjustments necessary to help limit the spread of COVID-19 and keep your staff and customers safe. Follow these measures:

- Keep any areas that are unable to follow social distancing or proper sanitation guidelines closed.
- Maintain adequate records of all customers—including names, contact information and visit dates—to be able to assist if contact tracing is needed. Do the same for employee records.
- Ensure that all of your operations and reopening plans are compliant with federal, state and local guidelines, as well as industry best practices.

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Consider designating one or multiple employees to be responsible for ensuring compliance.

By following these precautions, your organization can provide salon services to your community once again, while also keeping employees and customers as healthy and safe as possible. For additional reopening resources and the latest COVID-19 developments, contact us today.

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