

Example risk assessment for a hairdressing salon

Setting the scene

The salon owner carried out the risk assessment in their business, which employs eight staff, working a variety of full- and part-time shifts.

The salon is open from 10:00 am to 8:00 pm, six days a week. The premises consist of the salon, a stock room and a staff room with chairs, a kettle and a fridge.

Important reminder

This example risk assessment is to show you the kind of approach a small business can take. Use it as a guide to think through the hazards in your salon and the steps you need to take to control the risks. It is not a generic risk assessment that you can just put your company name on and adopt wholesale without any thought. That would not satisfy the law – and would not be effective in protecting people.

Every business is different – you need to think through the hazards in your premises and the controls you need for yourself.

How was the risk assessment done?

The manager followed the guidance in *Five steps to risk assessment* (www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf).

1 To identify the hazards, the salon owner:

- looked at HSE's *Essentials of health and safety at work* publication, to learn where hazards can occur, 'A Guide to the Health and Safety of Salon Hair Products' provided by her supplier, and HSE's 'Bad Hand Day' web pages on dermatitis;
- walked around the salon, the stock room and all other areas, noting things that might pose a risk and thinking about what was in the HSE guidance. Occasional activities, such as receiving deliveries and stacking stock, were also taken into account;
- talked to the staff to about health and safety issues and concerns in the salon;
- looked at the accident book, to understand what has previously resulted in incidents.

- 2 The owner then wrote down who could be harmed by the hazards and how.
- 3 For each hazard, the owner wrote down what controls, if any, were in place to manage these hazards. She then compared these controls to the guidance she had read. Where existing controls were not good enough, the owner wrote down what else needed to be done to control the risks.
- 4 Putting the risk assessment into practice, the owner discussed the findings with staff and pinned the risk assessment up on the notice board for all staff to see.
- 5 The owner decided to review and update the risk assessment every year, or straightaway if major changes happened at the salon.

With thanks to the National Hairdressing Federation, Habia, Jackie Hewson at Wella Professionals and Ann Seviour, Occupational Health and Safety Officer, Guildford Borough Council, for their help in developing this example risk assessment.

Company name: Smith's Hair Salon Date of risk assessment: 1/7/07

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	What further action is necessary?	Action by whom?	Action by when?	Done
Wet hand work, eg washing hair, working with wet hair	Staff may suffer from dermatitis, increased sensitivity, severely dry skin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Non-latex gloves are provided if staff want them. ■ Staff are trained to dry their hands thoroughly and moisturise between wet jobs. ■ Non-perfumed hand cream is provided for staff. 	■ Staff will wear gloves for all wet work.	Owner and staff	15/7/07	11/7/07
			■ Owner will get different size gloves, to fit all staff.	Owner and staff	15/7/07	11/7/07
			■ Staff will be asked to remove hand jewellery at beginning of shift.	Owner and staff	15/7/07	11/7/07
			■ Owner will look at www.hse.gov.uk/hairdressing/ and www.habia.org/	Owner and staff	15/7/07	11/7/07
Hairdressing products and chemicals All products, eg bleaches, colouring, perm solutions, sterilising liquid, cleaning chemicals (see below for specific additional precautions)	Staff and customers may get eye or skin irritation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Staff check and follow instructions on supplier information sheets. ■ Staff wear non-latex gloves when mixing and using product, and when washing up bowls etc. ■ Salon and stockroom well ventilated. ■ Clients must be well-protected with single-use towels. 	■ Owner to buy eye baths in case of splashing incidents.	Owner	31/7/07	25/7/07
			■ Staff always to check with customers for discomfort.	Staff	31/7/07	25/7/07
			■ No chemicals to be stored above eye level	Staff	15/7/07	15/7/07
Lightening (bleach) product	Staff and customers may get eye, skin or breathing irritation or allergy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Only purchasing non-dusty bleaches. ■ 	■ Owner will check with staff for skin/allergy problems every 3 months.	Owner	1/8/07 and then every 3 months	1/8/07
Hydrogen peroxide (developer/neutraliser)	Staff and customers may get eye or skin irritation	■ Staff trained to use recommended concentrations. Stored away from light, heat and other products.	■ None			
Oxidative colourants	Staff and customers may get eye or skin irritation. Low likelihood of serious allergic reaction.	■ Staff check with customers for history of allergy to colour and any damage to scalp. If yes, hair is not coloured unless the client has got doctor's advice.	■ Staff to perform skin allergy tests as per manufacturers' instructions 48 hours before treatment.	Manager and staff	31/5/07	25/5/07

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	What further action is necessary?	Action by whom?	Action by when?	Done
Slips and trips	Staff and clients may be injured if they trip over objects or trailing wires, or slip on hair/spillages/wet floors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Salon kept tidy. ■ Cut hair swept up promptly. ■ Any water/products spilt cleaned up immediately. ■ Matting provided for use at shop entrance. ■ No trailing cables. ■ Staff wear appropriate shoes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Staff reminded to check routinely for spills, and to use paper towels/cloths to clean up, not a wet mop. 	Manager and staff	31/5/07	25/5/07
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Check floor surface remains in good condition, when replacement needed consider flooring with better slip-resistant properties. 	Owner	31/5/07 and every year	25/5/07
Electricity	Staff could get electrical shocks or burns, and there is a fire hazard, from using wet or faulty electrical equipment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Staff report to manager any damaged plugs or cable. ■ Staff know where the fuse box is and how to turn the electricity off in emergencies. ■ Hairdryers and other electrical equipment stored and used away from water and only used with dry hands. ■ Electrical equipment bought only from reliable source. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Owner to do visual check of plugs, sockets and cables every six months. 	Owner	11/5/07 and twice a year	7/5/07
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Manager to ensure all electrical equipment stored away from water. 	Manager	11/5/07	4/5/07
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All shop electrics to be checked by an electrician every five years, water thermostats every year. 	Owner	30/6/07	20/6/07
Standing for long periods	Staff may suffer musculoskeletal injuries, eg back pain, neck or shoulder injuries and pain or discomfort in feet and legs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Client chairs are fully adjustable. ■ Sinks designed to minimise twisting. ■ Wheeled stools provided for staff to use while cutting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Owner to look at rotas to confirm all staff take regular breaks. 	Owner	31/5/07	25/5/07
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Owner to check conditions suitable to individual circumstances, eg pregnant workers, and adjust to suit person. 	Owner	31/5/07	25/5/07
Fire	If trapped in salon or other areas, eg stockroom, staff and clients could suffer from smoke inhalation and burns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fire risk assessment done, as per guidance at www.communities.gov.uk/fire and necessary action taken. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No aerosols or flammable products will be displayed in the window. 	Owner	1/6/07	6/6/07

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	What further action is necessary?	Action by whom?	Action by when?	Done
Blades and sharp instruments	Cuts and grazes to staff and clients. Possible blood transmission from one person to another; risk of blood-borne infection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All sharp implements cleaned with sterilising liquid after each use. ■ Sterilising liquid changed daily and follow maker's dilution instructions. ■ Disposable blades used wherever possible and disposed of immediately in sharps box. ■ First-aid box kept stocked. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Owner to introduce spot checks to ensure staff are following sterilising procedures (including spraying clipper heads). 	Owner	30/6/07	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Staff will wear gloves if dealing with nicks or cuts. ■ 	Staff	15/7/07	15/7/07
Moving furniture, heavy lifting	Staff may suffer musculoskeletal injuries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Staff know not to lift unless necessary and to test weights with foot before lifting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ None 			
Lone working	Staff alone in salon may suffer verbal or physical assault	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Staff know to lock up when working alone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Call-in to owner/manager system to confirm when left salon to be instigated. 	Owner/manager	3/7/07	3/7/07

Assessment review date: 1/7/08