

HAIRSTYLING AND BARBERING

Non-invasive hairstyling and barbering procedures are those that do not involve the use of equipment that could potentially come into contact with blood, body fluids or mucous membranes. These can include shampooing, cutting and styling of hair on a person's head and permanent or temporary hair colouring.

Invasive hairstyling and barbering procedures are those that involve the use of equipment that could potentially come into contact with blood, body fluids or mucous membranes. These can include straight edge razor blades for a wet shave, weaving/sewing needles for short, braided hair or extensions, and crochet hooks for cap highlights.

INFECTION RISKS

While the risk of infection from hairstyling is low, procedures that use a razor, scissors or other sharp instrument carry the risk of cutting a client. The open wound created by an accidental cut to a client's skin may allow the entry of disease-causing microorganisms. Infections can spread from:

- Contaminated and/or improperly reprocessed equipment
- Contaminated environment
- Client's own bacteria from different parts of the body
- Unclean hands touching the cut area

Barbering using a straight razor has been associated with bacterial infections such as skin infections caused by *Serratia marcescens* and viral infections such as hepatitis B virus, hepatitis C virus, or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Transmission of an infection of methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) onto a client's hairline through inadequately reprocessed hairstyling/barbering equipment has also been reported.

Do not provide service to client with head lice or signs of fungal infection of the scalp or neck. Advise the client to see a health care provider for assessment.

INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL REQUIREMENTS

Equipment:

Operators are to follow manufacturer's instructions for use (MIFU) for the dilution, preparation, use and replacement of disinfectant products provided in concentrated form, in order to ensure they are properly diluted and used.

- Reusable instruments and equipment (e.g., tweezers, crochet needles for highlights, combs, handles for straight shaving razors with disposable blades) are to be properly cleaned and

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disinfected after each use. Straight razors with a fixed blade (non-detachable from the handle) **are not recommended as these require sterilization after use**

- Cloth towels are to be laundered or placed in designated receptacle for items awaiting laundering after each client
- Single-use items (e.g., paper neck strips) are to be discarded after use and are not to be reused
- Place a reusable protective cover around the client's neck; a sanitary strip or clean towel is to be used to keep the protective cover from coming in direct contact with the client's neck. The neck strip of towel is to be discarded or laundered after each use
- Sharps (e.g., razor blades, needles/lancets used to expose ingrown hairs before shaving, weaving needles/extension needles) are to be discarded in an approved sharps container after use

Operational Requirements:

- The service provider checks the client's skin for open cuts, wounds, and signs of infection. If found, service is refused
- If a client gets a nick or other injury that draws blood during the service, operators are to provide a client with appropriate first aid (e.g., application of antiseptic and an adhesive dressing) and to document the accidental exposure. Conduct appropriate disinfection of the equipment after injury (intermediate-level disinfection)
- If a styptic agent is applied to stop client bleeding, this must be dispensed in a manner that prevents the introduction and/or spread of disease-causing microorganisms. Styptic pencils are not recommended

Reprocessing Classification

High-Level Disinfection	Intermediate-Level Disinfection	Low-Level Disinfection	Single-Use, Disposable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tweezers used to expose ingrown hairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tweezers used to remove hair from the hair follicle • Scissors used to cut hair ‡ • Crochet hooks for cap highlights ‡ • Hair clipper blades ‡ • Scissors used to cut hair ‡ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tables, chairs, hair sinks • Combs, brushes • Reusable colour mixing bowls • Crochet hooks for cap highlights ‡ • Hair clipper blades ‡ • Hair clipper guards and shaver guards • Hair rollers, clips and caps • Hair scissors • Handles for hairstyling and shaving razors • Scissors used to cut hair ‡ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicator used to apply styptic agent to stop bleeding • Gloves • Hair threading or weaving/sewing needles • Neck strip • Single-use crochet hooks for cap highlights, and cap • Single-use disposable razors and/or blades • Styptic products • Eyebrow razors • Lancets and needles used to remove ingrown hairs*

* These items are to be sterile before use

‡ If the equipment only contacts intact skin, then an intermediate-level disinfectant may be used

SOURCES

1. Health Protection and Promotion Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.H.7; O. Reg. 136/18: Personal Service Settings

2. Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). Guide to infection prevention and control in personal service settings. 3rd ed. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2019

This fact sheet was adapted with permission from CIPHI Ontario and is based on PSS best practice recommendations, current reprocessing standards and legislation. It is not an inclusive list of all requirements. Operators are responsible to ensure that all services are offered according to local requirements, best practices and legislation.