



SECTION 4.

Managing Key Hair Industry Risks



Section four covers the main hazards, risks and suggested controls to help you manage health and safety risks in your salon or barbershop.

4.1 General Workplace Requirements

Health and Safety Regulations require a workplace to have adequate facilities (that are clean, safe, accessible, in good working order and well maintained) for the welfare of your workers, including:

- Toilets
- Drinking water
- Handwashing facilities
- Facilities where workers can eat and take breaks
- A place to change clothes that will become contaminated or wet
- Facilities for workers to keep clothes that are not used at work clean and dry (e.g., lockers)
- Somewhere for workers to rest (if it is not reasonable for workers to leave the workplace if they become unwell)
- First aid supplies

You also need to make sure your workplace is healthy. This includes having good ventilation, a comfortable working temperature and suitable lighting for the tasks carried out. More on these aspects are included below.

4.2 Salon / Barbershop Layout

The workplace should be arranged as far as is reasonably practicable in a way that protects the health and safety of hairdressers and barbers. When designing or making changes to the layout, make sure you include health and safety in your design.

Fixtures And Fittings

Fixtures and fittings need to be laid out to create easy accessibility for workers. A good salon / barbershop layout (e.g., good path design, floor surfaces that allow equipment to be moved with ease) will also help your workers as it will limit the need to push, pull or carry equipment or loads.

Fixtures and fittings must be well constructed, secured, and maintained to ensure they remain in good, safe working condition.

Install shelves for equipment and materials at heights accessible for your workers.

Furniture

Chairs

Client chairs should be height adjustable so you can work on clients at a suitable level. This will minimise workers adopting awkward postures which can lead to musculoskeletal disorders including neck, arm and shoulder pain. The chair design, particularly the range of heights, needs to provide good access for cutting, blow waving and applying colours, etc. Hairdressers and barbers should be encouraged to regularly check and (where required) adjust chair height to suit. Provide portable footrests if the chairs if the chairs do not have them built in.



Stools



Provide stools (height adjustable, with castors) to relieve stress on legs and joints and to allow hairdressers and barbers to work at varying heights without stooping. Both the flat and the saddle style operator stools as shown below can significantly reduce standing time.

Trolleys

Provide moveable trolleys (with castors) to reduce carrying equipment and so you can keep tools within easy reach. Make sure trolleys are stable so they won't tip over and of a suitable height for workers. Keep the wheels free from hair (this can also prevent them from falling over).

Storage

Store stock in smaller containers that are easier to store and lift.

Basins

The fixed height, placement and design of the basin can contribute to discomfort, pain and ultimately result in musculoskeletal disorders. Where possible:

- Provide free standing basins. This will provide better access with room to work from the rear or the sides.
- Have adjustable basins and / or chair with either an attached or portable footrest.



- Mount the taps and hose to allow free access to the basin.



Difficult Side Access to the Basin



Standing Behind a Freestanding Basin Means There is no Twisting

Workstations

Workstations can be busy areas and there needs to be enough space for the client and for you to operate and use equipment. Power points should be at bench level, so power cords don't become trip hazards.

Design workstations so that cables don't trail or cross the salon / barbershop floor. This will minimise the risk of someone tripping over the cable.

Surfaces (including Work Surfaces and Flooring)

Work surfaces should be between hip and waist height (e.g., around 90cm). Surfaces need to be smooth, impervious to water and capable of being easily cleaned).

Design flooring to be non-slip. Floor surfaces in the service area also need to be of a durable material, impervious to water and capable of being easily cleaned. Maintain flooring in a good condition. If you see any damage, get it fixed as soon as possible.

Uneven or slippery floors increase the likelihood of slips, trips and falls. The presence of steps, changes in floor coverings etc. can also increase the risk of injury. Make sure you are not creating a different risk when you are choosing a floor covering.

Further requirements are included in the Health (Hairdressing) Regulations 1980.

Lighting

Good levels of light from natural or artificial sources are essential in your salon or barbershop. Poor lighting can contribute to:

- Incidents and injuries, including cuts.
- Tired sore eyes.
- Headaches.



- Blurred vision.

Glare and shadows may also force you to adopt awkward body positions to see your work.

Lighting must be sufficient to allow hairdressers and barbers to be able to work efficiently and safely. This includes being reasonably free from glare and shadows. Lighting also needs to be suitable for the work being carried out. For example if you are applying hair dye, you will need suitable lighting to allow you to see true to daylight colour.

Correct lighting will also:

- Help create the right appearance, atmosphere and sense of comfort.
- Allow people to move about safely.
- Assist people to adopt a correct posture.

A good lighting plan should include directional lighting, positional spotlighting and sufficient overall room lighting to reduce glare and shadows in the work area. This may involve using a variety of both lamp types and fitting types to achieve optimum results.

The three main types of lamp types used in salon / barbershops and their expected results are:

Type of Light	General Information
Halogen	Best light type for colour 
Fluorescent	White light 
Incandescent	Warm yellow light 

The light fitting types include:

Type of Light	General Information
Spotlight	Provide directional light, can produce shadows unless there are sufficient lights positioned to light from all angles 
Fluorescent Grids	Downward lighting; does not light ceilings or walls 
Uplighters	Produce a bland light 



Type of Light	General Information
Pendants	Light in all directions, work well when supplemented with other fittings to generate sufficient light 

Whatever lighting you use, make sure the bulbs are cleaned and well maintained to ensure they remain effective.

Ventilation

Good ventilation is crucial in your salon or barbershop. It is useful at controlling the temperature inside your salon or barbershop, creating a more comfortable working environment. A good example of how heat can build up is through the use of hair dryers and other equipment.

Good ventilation also prevents the build-up of condensation and moisture and helps to remove potentially harmful dusts and vapours (e.g., smoothing treatments and hair dye). Generally, natural ventilation is not sufficient to effectively control exposure to hazardous substances and you may need to consider installing mechanical ventilation or an extraction system. This is particularly important if you are working with or mixing hazardous substances to limit spread throughout the salon / barbershop.

Air purifiers may also help remove some pollutants from the air and help improve indoor air quality. Many of these units are portable and don't take up too much space. Make sure you get a unit with suitable capacity for the size of your work area and suitable filters. Note that you will need to regularly change the filters for optimal performance.

Note that air conditioning just circulates air around the room (diluting the concentration of chemicals – not removing them). Unless there is uniform flow around the salon or barbershop, it is likely that there will be pockets of contaminated air. A mechanical extraction system (or local exhaust ventilation) is more effective in removing contaminants.

4.3 Housekeeping: Slips, Trips, and Falls

Poor housekeeping can contribute to incidents such as slips, trips and falls.

Slips, Trips, and Falls

Injuries can be caused by many different things. For example:

- Slippery floors from wet hair, hair clippings, spilt water or hair products on the floor.
- Trailing cables from hairdryers, straighteners or curlers, which get extended across walkways or tangled around the feet of styling chairs.
- Moving trolleys or stools.
- Products falling from shelves onto the floor.



- Clutter.
- Uneven or damaged flooring (discussed in the flooring section of this Guide).

Everyone has a part to play in maintaining a tidy salon / barbershop. Some key housekeeping tips are included below:

- Keep the salon / barbershop tidy – housekeeping is really important in preventing slips, trips and falls.
- Regularly inspect the floors and clean up cut hair, water and any spilled products promptly.
- Sweep the floor at every opportunity and definitely between each client.
- Use matting at the shop entrance to prevent clients slipping on wet tiles on a rainy day.
- If the floor is wet, put up a wet / slippery floor sign.
- Use non-slip matting around wash basins.
- Maintain flooring in a good condition. If you see any damage, get it fixed as soon as possible. In the meantime minimise the risk if you can (e.g., warning signage, barrier it if you need to organise the salon so that foot stools, equipment, product displays and magazine racks do not obstruct movement.
- Remove boxes and rubbish from the work area and keep entrances and exits clear.
- Ensure utensils, liquid or semi-liquid package products are stored in an accessible and stable position to prevent them spilling or falling on to the floor.
- Regularly maintain equipment with moving parts and trolleys, and ensure breaking mechanisms work to avoid accidents from unintentional movements.
- Ask workers to wear non-slip comfortable shoes, with closed toes and rubber soles. Make sure the condition of the soles is checked regularly to ensure they are not worn out and still provide decent grip.



4.4 Electrical Safety

Water and electricity are a dangerous mix. Blow dryers, straighteners and other tools all require electricity, often near water, which can lead to electrical shocks or burns. Using faulty equipment can create a fire hazard.

Controlling the Risks

All businesses must ensure that electrical equipment provided is safe to operate and maintained so that it remains safe. This may be achieved by:

- Devising a system for regularly checking all electrical appliances and for immediately marking and removing faulty equipment from service.
- Regularly inspecting electrical cords and appliances for fraying or wear and tear.
- Keeping a maintenance log of electrical equipment.
- Ensuring all sockets are protected by a Residual Current Device (RCD).
- Having regular inspections, commonly known as ‘test and tag’ performed by a qualified electrical worker. (The test and tag label are displayed on the equipment cord stating date of most recent test, when the next test is due and most importantly if the equipment passed the test. Any item that has not passed, should be removed and repaired or replaced).
- Having any electrical repairs carried out by a qualified electrician / the manufacturer’s agent.
- Ensuring the fixed salon / barbershop electrical system has been serviced and tested by a registered electrician.
- Ensuring all hot and cold-water pipes are suitably bonded and earthed.
- Providing adequate numbers of sockets at every workstation. Do not overload sockets and eliminate the use of adaptors / multi-boards.

Using Safe Work Practices

- Follow the manufacturer’s instructions on the use and maintenance of equipment. Keep instructions for future reference.
- Don’t use broken power points – tape them off and get an electrician in to fix it.
- Make sure flexible cords are fully unwound for use - keep the cords elevated and off the floor so you don’t create a trip hazard.
- Switch the plug off at the wall before pulling out the power cable.
- Disconnect from the power supply before cleaning.



- Store electrical equipment safely away from wet or moist areas when not in use.
- Do not hang appliances by their electrical cord.
- Avoid getting electrical appliances wet and don't use appliance or touch switches with wet clothes or when hands are wet.
- Choose equipment that shuts off automatically if you accidentally leave it on.
- Check temperatures and settings on equipment before switching on and using on the client.

4.5 Tools of the Trade

As a hairdresser or barber, you will be using a variety of hand tools, for example scissors, razors, combs, straighteners and curling irons and blow dryers. Poor design and excessive use of hand tools can contribute to occupational overuse injuries (OOS) and musculoskeletal injuries. For example, heavy tools such as blow dryers, or tools that have awkward grip.

Continuous use of tools means that the size and weight of tools must be considered to avoid stress on fingers, wrists, arms, shoulders etc. The shape of the handles and grips also need to be considered to reduce stresses on the body. Note that this section refers specifically to the tools of the trade - musculoskeletal injuries are covered in more detail in **SECTION 4.8**.

Some key considerations for managing risks associated with tools of the trade include:

- Select well designed tools:
 - Discuss the selection and purchase of tools and equipment with workers before you buy them;
 - Consider the shape and orientation of the handles to reduce force and awkward wrist positions and allow easy grip;
 - Consider the weight of the tool or appliance - make sure that tools such as blow dryers are as light as possible;
 - Provide appropriately designed scissors that keep your wrists straight and do not dig into the hand.
- Follow manufacturer's instructions.
- Have a good inspection and maintenance programme in place to ensure your tools and equipment are well maintained.
- Make sure all workers are trained in how to use tools ergonomically to reduce the risk of occupational overuse syndrome and musculoskeletal problems.



An example of risk management and the tool selection process is provided below:

Tool: Scissors

Hazard:	Scissors - using scissors requires repetitive movement.
Risk:	Advances in cutting and texturising techniques have greatly increased the rate of movement, which has increased the risk of occupational overuse syndrome and musculoskeletal injuries (MSD). Scissors are the most frequently used tool of the trade, so the likelihood of an injury is high. The consequence is that the worker may get an MSD and be unable to work (a 'lost time' injury').

Risk Controls

Need to avoid constrained or awkward wrist positions, and repetitive movement outside the desired range of movements of the thumb.

With 'A' Frame scissors, the movement is towards the fourth finger bringing it outside the desired range of safe movement of the thumb.

Offset scissors with a downward crane are anatomically safer and can reduce the risk of pain and discomfort injury occurring. When using this type of scissor the strongest movement of the thumb is towards the first finger.





‘A’ frame scissors have the 4th finger and thumb holes equal distance from the centre screw. This brings the movement towards the weaker fourth finger, and outside the desired range of movement of the thumb.

This can lead to holding the scissors in an awkward position and result in an MSD.



Offset’ scissors have the thumb hold closer to the centre screw, bringing the strongest movement of the thumb towards the first finger is better practice.



*Advanced offset scissors with a crane allow the strongest movement of the thumb to remain closest to the first finger, and allows the arms to be held at a lower-level while cutting– **Desirable***

4.6 Hot Surfaces / Equipment

Contact with hot surfaces and equipment can cause burns if the risk is not carefully managed. Injuries can be caused by:

- Hot water (from washing hair with water that is too hot).
- Using heated tools on hair (straighteners, curling irons, steamers and hairdryers).

If you have any other equipment or hot surfaces, you will need to consider how someone can get hurt and what risk controls are likely to minimise that risk for each piece of equipment / hot surface. Some key tips to consider for managing the risk are below:

- Use heating irons and straighteners that automatically switch off after a set period of time or have safety features that reduce the potential for the operator to touch the hot parts.
- Limit the temperature of hot taps at wash basins. Where this is not practical, implement a method to check the temperature of the water before use. Ask clients if the water temperature is comfortable – start on the cooler side.
- Store straighteners and curling irons away from clients and on heat resistant mats when switched on to avoid accidental contact with the hot parts.
- Ensure lighting levels are sufficient enough to allow workers to clearly see what they are doing.

Make sure your first aid supplies include burn gels and have procedures in place to ensure that any burns are treated and covered so that work doesn't make the burns worse.



4.7 Sharp Equipment

Sharp equipment includes anything that is capable of cutting, or of penetrating the skin. As a hairdresser or barber, you will be using sharp equipment, such as scissors and razors. If not handled correctly or if the sharp equipment is placed carelessly, injuries can occur, so care with sharp equipment is crucial to prevent cut and puncture injuries. Cuts and grazes also come with a risk of possible blood transmission from one person to another and a risk of blood-borne infections such as Hepatitis B, C and HIV. Infection control is covered in more detail in **SECTION 4.10** of this Guide).

For hairdressers and barbers, cuts can become infected by the use of chemicals and constant immersion of hands in water. Make sure cuts are covered when you are working and if you have any concerns about the cuts, get medical advice.

Some tips to prevent injuries from sharp equipment are provided below:

- Keep all sharp utensils such as scissors, razors or clippers in good condition.
- Store all sharp utensils in protective coverings when not being used.
- Wear gloves when changing the blades.
- Have special bins allocated for the disposal of sharp blades and razors.
- Have good infection control procedures – clean, disinfect and sterilise equipment after each use and do not reuse equipment that is labelled as 'single use' (e.g., blades).
- Wear gloves for open razor work to protect against blood-borne viruses and bacteria.
- Check during the client consult if the client is on any medication that could cause a problem if they are cut.
- Ensure lighting levels are suitable for the work carried out.
- Ensure stylists / barbers are trained in how to use their equipment properly.

4.8 Occupational Overuse and Musculoskeletal Disorders

Occupational overuse syndrome is a type of overuse injury, caused by repetitive movement, constant muscle contraction or straining, forceful movements, or awkward postures in a work environment. Symptoms include persistent discomfort or pain in muscles, joints, tendons, nerves, and / or soft tissues – these are called musculoskeletal disorders (MSD).

The manual tasks performed in the hair industry are physically demanding. As a hairdresser or barber, you will be performing constant, repetitive actions with your hands and wrists while cutting hair. You may have experienced times where your tendons have become irritated and inflamed by awkward postures or repetitive hand movements. This is an early warning sign of an MSD and if left untreated, it can lead to repetitive strain injuries from overuse. Refer to the risk control section for advice on how to manage the risk.



Causes

Generally, MSDs are caused by repetitive tasks or activities, which are carried out without sufficient recovery time, leading to soft tissue injuries. Contributing factors that can lead to MSDs include:

- Awkward or constricted postures (e.g., bending or twisting your back when washing hair).
- Repetitive movement (e.g., cutting).
- Prolonged muscle tension (especially when holding heavier items).
- Forceful holding or movement (e.g., holding the blow dryer away from the body).
- Vibration, especially over long periods (e.g., clippers, blow dryers).
- Poor design or arrangement of equipment and furniture (ergonomics).
- Poor work practices (e.g., poor time management, poor work techniques, lack of training).
- Psychosocial factors (e.g., excessive workload, tight deadlines, an uninspiring social and work environment.)

Symptoms

Symptoms of MSDs tend to develop gradually and worsen over time if left untreated. Overuse injury can affect the tendons, nerves, and / or muscles of the fingers, hands, wrists, elbows, shoulders, back and neck. Early symptoms of overuse injury include:

- Muscle discomfort or weakness.
- Aches and pains.
- Hot or cold feelings.
- Muscles tightness and spasms.
- Numbness or tingling.
- Restricted range of movement.

It can also lead to tiredness, headaches, anxiety, and loss of concentration. As the condition progresses, pain and discomfort may become constant, and there may be a loss of muscle strength, burning sensations in the tissues, and sleep disturbances.

Risk Controls

The goal is to prevent any discomfort and pain - rather than stop an activity after it starts. Some tips to manage the risk are below.



Work Layout and Equipment

- Design the salon or barbershop with people in mind - provide adjustable furniture and equipment – one size does not fit all when it comes to chairs and work surfaces. This will minimise the amount of bending over, stooping – or the opposite and workers have their arms held above shoulder level:
 - Make sure that if workers are in the seated position, that the top of their knees are not higher than the ball of the hip. If the back of the knees compress against the chair seat, then put something under the feet to raise the knees to a comfortable position.
- Make sure there is adequate spacing around work equipment, so workers don't need to adopt awkward positions to carry out tasks.
- Have suitable storage available. Store items at appropriate height (heavy and frequently used items should be stored between knee and shoulder height to minimise lifting items above shoulder level or repeatedly bending down).
- Provide ergonomically designed tools and equipment. Make sure tools are maintained appropriately so they don't need more effort to use (e.g., scissors are sharpened).
- Swap out equipment that is making your hand, wrist or arm uncomfortable.
- Make sure tools provided have suitable hand grips.

Administrative Controls (Training, Work Practices, and Procedures)

- Have a process for dealing with reports of pain, aches and discomfort. Encourage your workers to report promptly any aches and pains, so the cause can be identified, and the risk managed before symptoms become severe or chronic.
- Ensure stylists / barbers know how to use the equipment they are provided with, including how to adjust it to meet their specific needs.
- Teach correct techniques from the beginning to avoid unnecessary wear and tear on the joints, muscles, tendons and ligaments. Changing work technique takes time and if a task is performed inappropriately, it can take time to reverse the habit.
- Train workers in good posture management (e.g., which body movements and positions to use to avoid long term injuries such as working within the mid-range of movement of the joints and muscles.)
- Avoid prolonged or repetitive activities - promote the importance of micro pauses, short breaks and task variations.
- Alternate between sitting and standing (e.g., when cutting hair, or moving between tasks of sweeping and shampooing.)



- Alternate between tasks using different muscles. This does not have to stop productive work (e.g., recovering from cutting by folding towels, sweeping or reception duties, sitting during consultations.)
- Encourage workers to change work practices and techniques where necessary.
- Make sure hairdressers and barbers manage their appointments, particularly those involving physically demanding tasks such as highlighting.
- Use rubber anti-fatigue mats to minimise the impact of standing on hard floor (hard floors can place additional stress on feet, knees, and the back and lead to achy joints.)
- Ask stylists / barbers to wear suitable footwear – low heel, closed toe, rubber soles.

Some examples of how to minimise the risk of an MSD are provided below:



Bending Over is an Example of an Awkward Posture



Use a Stool and Sit Erect with Your Back in its Natural Curve

Invest in suitable tools and equipment to minimize the risk to workers.



Knife Handle Grip and Prolonged Periods with Your Arms Raised Above Shoulder Can Lead to Musculoskeletal Disorders



Use a Stool and Sit Erect with Your Back in its Natural Curve



Use tools in a manner that does not require you to have your arms in awkward positions.

Combs



Knife Grip of the Comb; Elbow Out, Shoulders May Be Raised, can Lead to an MSD



Combing Using a Spoon Grip of the Comb, the Elbow Down, Also the 'Finger Crossed' Grip (the Bottom of the Second Finger is Pressing Against the Top of the First Finger)



Knife Handle Grip



Better. Spoon Grip of the Comb, Elbow not Held Out

How the comb is held and rotated in the hand determines the range of movements that can be carried out and the angles of the wrist and arm.

Holding the comb with a 'spoon grip' enables you to keep your elbow closer to the side of the body and reduce the angle you hold your wrist. This can reduce the risk of pain and discomfort injury, which could lead to MSD occurring.



Dryers



Pistol Grip of Dryer with Elbow Up



Barrel Grip of Dryer with Elbow Down

Use a hand grip that will keep the elbow as low as possible below the shoulder
Use the slowest rotation of the dryer to achieve the desired result.

Changing Work Technique and Equipment

Consider the following steps:

- Take it slowly and spread the change over several weeks.
- Visualise the preferred practice in your mind.
- Practice different ways of holding the comb and operating the scissors.
- Use a mannequin to practice the technique(s).
- Develop the new technique(s) for short periods of time when feeling fresh - early in the working day or when you return from a break.
- Let speed of work increase at its own rate. Trying to hurry will slow down the learning process.
- Allow time to get the muscles up to working fitness with the different way of holding the tools.
- Only take on one change at a time.



4.9 Hazardous Substances

If you work in a salon or barbershop, you are likely to be working with hazardous substances daily. You may not realise it, but the products you use contain chemicals, some of which are hazardous substances, that may have the potential to damage your health.

Hazardous substances likely to be found in salons and barbershops include:

- Aerosols
- Shampoos and conditioners
- Hair dye
- Peroxides and bleaches
- Hairspray
- Henna products
- Permanent wave solutions
- Straightening creams
- Cleaning chemicals and disinfectants

Hazardous substances can get into your system in several different ways, including:

Inhalation:	Breathing in hairspray, or when mixing, decanting, applying product or cleaning up.
Injection:	Coming into contact with contaminated sharp objects (e.g., scissors or razors).
Direct Contact:	Splashes or vapours in the eyes or on the skin, or when mixing, decanting, applying product or cleaning up. Sometimes chemicals can go through the skin and into your body.
Ingestion:	Swallowing chemicals or eating contaminated food, or not adequately washing your hands before eating.

If you aren't aware of what is in these products and don't have good risk controls in place, you are at a greater risk of having your health impacted. You also run the risk of more serious (or permanent damage) to your immune, reproductive, neurological, or respiratory system if symptoms are ignored or undiagnosed. The likelihood of chemicals causing health effects depends on a number of factors including the toxicity of



the substance, the amount of chemical used and the duration and frequency of exposure. Some examples of the effects of hazardous substances include:

Skin

Irritation, rash or dermatitis. Severe allergic reaction from repeated contact with irritants or allergens can lead to 'contact dermatitis' (discussed further in the **SECTION 4.11**). Chemicals in dye can also result in burns (if not patch tested first).

Respiratory System

Wheezing, coughing, pain or difficulty breathing, or asthma from exposure to dusts or vapours. Products that may cause occupational asthma include cleaning chemicals, henna, hair spray, solvents and cleaners, dust from latex and hair products.

Working in the salon or barbershop should not result a risk to the health and safety if used correctly and manufacturers' instructions are followed. However, if you think that you or a colleague has developed dermatitis or asthma as a result of exposure to hazardous substances at work, then it is essential that you see a doctor straight away. A doctor can then give a diagnosis of whether the symptoms being experienced are related to the products you are using and will advise on whether work activity should continue or whether changes need to be made.

Risk Controls

Look out for the pictograms (red and white symbols) on the product labels. This will inform you if the product is harmful to health. If the chemicals you use are harmful, buy a safer alternative product, where possible.

Some types of hair products are known to cause problems and so may be labelled 'may cause sensitisation by inhalation' or 'may cause sensitisation by skin contact', or 'can cause allergic reactions'.

Check the label of any products that you use to decide upon the necessary precautions. If for example, the hairspray says that it may cause sensitisation, wear a face mask and stand well back when using it, as some products can make existing asthma worse. Keep the workplace well ventilated. Have a door or window open if possible, to get clean, fresh air flowing through.

Training and Information

Read the warning labels on all substances. If a product is harmful to your health, the manufacturer is legally required to ensure the product is labelled with appropriate hazard symbols, warnings, health and safety advice and any personal protective equipment that must be used when handling it.

Manufacturers are required by law to supply health and safety information on the products they supply if the product contains potentially hazardous chemicals. They are also required to provide details on the precautions that should be taken to reduce any risks – this information may be provided via a Safety Data Sheet. You should have a Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for each substance you have at the salon or barbershop. The SDS provides key information on the product. For example:

- What you need to know about the substance before and while you use it.



- How to handle it safely, so you don't put yourself or others at risk.
- What to do if a hazardous situation occurs.

Contact your supplier if you do not have this information.

The SDS needs to be available and accessible for your workers, and for the emergency services if there is an incident onsite. Keep a copy of the SDS in the mixing area and / or near where the substances are stored and make sure everyone knows where the SDSs are located.

Everyone that uses, handles, or stores hazardous substances also needs to have training in how to work safely with those substances. This is a legal requirement.

Storing and Using Hazardous Substances

Store and use products as directed by the manufacturer (and on the SDS).

Cover clients exposed skin (neck and arms) with towels and gowns to prevent chemicals from touching their skin while you are applying it. If there is any indication of a skin reaction, stop immediately.

Make sure you use personal protective equipment when handling chemicals. This includes gloves, coveralls (aprons) and (if there is a risk of splashing) eye protection. The PPE required will be stated on the SDS and on the product label.

Make sure that you cap the containers immediately after use to reduce exposure to air. This will also prevent a spill if it is accidentally knocked over. Check that the container is properly sealed before storing it away.

Keep storage areas adequately secured. This is particularly important if there are children around. Chemicals must be kept out of their reach.

Make sure you store incompatible substances away from each other. Depending on the substance, this may mean in a different area of the salon or barbershop. Some substances may need to be stored in locked, fireproof cabinets.

Keep an inventory of your hazardous substances, including the quantity of each substance (this is a legal requirement). This inventory needs to be available and accessible in case of emergency. You may also need to provide the information to the emergency services so think about how and where you will keep it (e.g., electronic via a 'cloud' or hardcopy located near the door).

Decanting and Mixing

- Where possible, purchase chemicals in ready-to-use packages, rather than decanting them into smaller packages – this reduces the chance of coming into contact with the chemicals.
- mix and apply chemicals in a well-ventilated room, away from food preparation areas. Don't mix products with other products not specified in the instructions.
- DO NOT use food or drink containers to store chemicals. Once you have decanted a substance, make sure you label the container appropriately. Labelling needs to be in accordance with the requirements of the [Health and Safety at Work \(Hazardous Substances\) Regulations 2017](#).



- Make sure you have a drip tray to catch any spilled substance.
- Wear the PPE stated on the SDS for the substance.
- Keep a spill kit nearby.
- Make sure the first aid supplies (and if possible, an eye wash station) are in close proximity in case of a spill.

Emergencies

Have emergency procedure in place and train your workers in them, so they know what to do if someone gets a chemical burn, spills product or has an allergic reaction.

Make sure you have appropriate spill kits (and that workers know how to use them).

Have an eye bath available in case chemicals go into a worker or client's eyes. Use eye protection if there is a potential risk and if it is required based on the information in the SDS.

Chemical Disposal

Some hazardous substances (e.g., dyes and wave solution) can be harmful to the freshwater and marine ecosystem. Make sure you read the labels on the bottles and the SDS before emptying the bottle down the sink. The SDS (and your local Council) will have further information on how you can dispose of unwanted chemicals and the empty bottles safely.

Commonly Used Products

Product	Ingredients	Health Risks
Shampoo	Sodium laureth sulphate, triethanolamine laurel sulphate, cocamido propyl betaine	Prolonged and repeated skin contact can degrease the skin, causing irritation and contact eczema. Splashes in eyes can cause pain. Ingestion can cause pain in the mouth and throat, and nausea.
Conditioners, Treatments	Cetrimonium chloride, cocoamido propyl betaine, betaine monohydrate	Prolonged and repeated skin contact can cause mild irritation. Splashes in eyes can cause pain. Ingestion can cause pain in the mouth and throat, and stomach discomfort.
Cold Permanent Waves	Ammonium thioglycolate, ammonia	May cause skin and mucous membrane irritation. Avoid inhalation, ingestion, eye contact and prolonged skin contact.
Neutralisers	Hydrogen peroxide	Skin, eye and respiratory irritant. Avoid ingestion, eye contact or prolonged skin contact.
Permanent Hair Colour	Ammonium hydroxide, 2.5 toluenediamine, aromatic amines	Skin, eye, mucous membrane and respiratory irritant. May cause irritation and allergic reactions. Avoid inhalation, ingestion, eye contact or prolonged skin contact.



Product	Ingredients	Health Risks
Peroxide Solutions Emulsions and Cremes	Hydrogen peroxide	Skin, eye, mucous membrane and respiratory irritant. Concentrations of over 5% hydrogen peroxide can irritate and whiten skin and cause strong itching and / or pain. Splashes in eyes can cause severe pain and burns. Ingestion can cause pain in mouth and throat and may cause vomiting and stomach pain.
Powder Bleach / Cream Bleach	Persulphates of sodium, ammonia and potassium	Inhalation of dust can cause pain and irritation in the nose and throat. Prolonged skin contact can cause dryness and irritation. Dust or splashes of solution can cause severe pain. Ingestion can cause pain in the mouth and throat and vomiting and stomach pain.
Styling Gels, Non--Aerosol Hairsprays, Setting Lotions	Ethanol	Prolonged and repeated skin contact can degrease the skin and cause irritation. Contact with eyes will cause pain. Ingestion can cause pain in the mouth and throat.
Aerosol Hairsprays, Mousses	Ethanol, hydrocarbons	Inhalation can cause pain and irritation to the nose and throat. High concentrations can cause headaches and tiredness. Prolonged and repeated skin contact can cause irritation. Ingestion can cause pain in mouth and throat. Splashes of foam in the eyes can be painful.
Aerosol Colour Mousses	Aromatic amines, hydrocarbon	May cause irritation and allergic reactions. Inhalation can cause irritation to the nose and throat. Ingestion can cause pain in mouth and throat. Splashes in the eyes can be painful. Prolonged and repeated skin contact can cause irritation
Relaxer	Sodium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide, lithium hydroxide, calcium hydroxide, guanidine hydroxide Ammonium thioglycolate, ethanolamine thioglycolate	Irritant to skin and eyes. Can cause blindness.
Keratin Smoothing Treatments	Formaldehyde	Must not contain any form of formaldehyde that can be freed during treatments above 0.05%. May cause sore throat, cough, scratchy eyes and nosebleeds. Is a known carcinogen. Use with good ventilation.
Rubber and Latex Gloves	Thiuram mercaptobenzothiazole	Allergic contact dermatitis.
Antiseptics	Quaternary ammonium compounds	Irritation or allergic reaction.

Pre-Disposition Test (Patch Test)

Patch test according to the manufacturer's instructions before using new products (e.g., hair colourant) on a client. You should carry the test out at least 48 hours prior to the colour application, even if you have used



colourant on the client before. It is not recommended that you colour your client's hair if they have previously experienced a reaction to hair colourant, or if they have sensitive, itchy or damaged scalp.

In case of an unexpected reaction (stinging, burning, or a rash) during application, rinse the hair immediately with lukewarm water to remove the colourant. Before colouring the hair again, recommend your client seeks and follows medical advice in order to avoid an increase in the severity of the reaction.

Skin Allergy Testing Procedure

- Clean with surgical spirit 1cm behind the ear and using a spatula, apply a little of the colourant product to the area. Reapply two to three times allowing it to dry between each application.
- Leave for 48 hours without washing.
- If during this period, you notice irritation, itching or redness, or your client experiences any other allergic type reaction, do not apply the product.



4.10 Hygiene and Infection Control

Workers in the hair industry are at risk of a variety of hazards that can cause infectious diseases. For example:

- Blood borne diseases (e.g., Hepatitis B or C, HIV)
- Airborne diseases (e.g., viruses such as COVID-19, colds and flu)
- Skin infections (e.g., staphylococcus)
- Skin infestations (e.g., lice)

Shampooing, cutting, styling and shaving are all activities that can expose workers to these diseases from either direct contact (applying first aid to a cut) or indirect contact (handling contaminated items).

Unsafe or unhygienic practices can affect the health of both the client and the worker. Clients are exposed to the risk if equipment has not been adequately cleaned and disinfected or sterilised.

Infection Control

Under the Health (Hairdressers) Regulations 1980, employers are responsible for maintaining salon / barbershop cleanliness. This means keeping all fittings, equipment, furniture, materials and tools free from bacteria or germs that cause infection or disease.

Control measures must be put in place to protect against infectious and communicable diseases:

- Treat all blood and body substances as potentially infectious and take standard precautions to prevent exposure (e.g., wearing disposable gloves, good hygiene practices and the safe handling of sharps).



- Provide a number of sets of equipment to allow some equipment to be cleaned and disinfected or sterilised while others are in use.
- Regularly clean, disinfect and sterilise tools and equipment.
- Follow the recommended dilutions and storage requirements for disinfectants and take note of use by dates.
- Clean up spills straight away (clean-as-you-go).
- Wash out all equipment after use and dispose of any waste safely.
- For equipment that comes into contact with skin, clean it before and after each use (e.g., chairs).

NOTE: It is important to know that difference between cleaning, disinfecting and sterilising.

Cleaning:	Physically removing germs (bacteria and viruses), dirt and grime from surfaces using a detergent and water solution. A detergent is a surfactant that is designed to break up oil and grease with the use of water.
Disinfecting:	A process (generally using chemicals) to kill many or all pathogenic microorganisms (except spores) on surfaces. Cleaning MUST be carried out before disinfecting because dirt and grime can reduce the ability of disinfectants to kill germs. Most disinfectants contain over 70% alcohol, quaternary ammonium compounds, chlorine bleach or oxygen bleach. All of these are suitable for use on hard surfaces (surfaces where any spilt liquid pools and does not soak in).
Sterilising:	A process (generally using chemicals or other methods such as steam, heat or radiation) to eliminate all forms of microbial life including fungi, bacteria, parasites, and spores.

Personal Hygiene

Safe and hygienic work practices need to be applied to every client because some people may not be aware that they have an infection, and even if they are aware, they are not obliged to inform you about it. Good personal hygiene practices, including tying long hair back, trimming nails will help prevent you from getting infection.



Hand Hygiene

Hand hygiene is the most important step in preventing the spread of infection from one person to another. Hands can become contaminated through contact with a client, the environment or other workers. As a general rule, wash your hands:

- Before and after contact with each client or after any interruptions in a procedure.
- After eating or smoking, or answering the phone.
- After going to the toilet.
- After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.
- After handling laundry or waste.
- After contact with blood or other bodily substances.
- when your hands become visibly contaminated.

Make sure there are adequate hand washing facilities and antibacterial soap, paper towels and a rubbish bin available near all basins. Use touch free soap dispensers to reduce the chance of the soap becoming contaminated. If you have pump bottles, make sure you wash the bottle and nozzle in warm water and detergent, rinse and then dry frequently.

Wash hands with soap and warm water, rinse, and then pat hands dry using disposable paper towels or a hot air dryer.

Scrubbing brushes are not recommended for scrubbing hands as they can cause damaged to the skin.

Keep cuts or abrasions covered with a waterproof adhesive dressing. If you do get cut while working, clean and cover the cut as soon as it happens, rather than continuing to work.

Hair and Scalp Infections

As a hairdresser or barber you will be in situations that require contact with the skin, scalp and hair of many different clients. Infections can be bacterial, viral or fungal. Two of the more common hair infections are tinea capitis and impetigo (caused by streptococci) and both can be passed onto others by direct or indirect contact. Most of the time, infections are visible on the client, however if you are not aware of what to look for, you are at risk of being exposed to the infection. If you are concerned about what you see, ask your clients upfront about infections or illnesses they may have.

Note that some viral infections (e.g., herpes, Hepatitis C and even HIV) are not be visible and in many cases may be extremely serious. Make sure your workers are aware of infection risks – consider getting medical advice on any precautionary vaccinations available.

Skin infestations (e.g., lice) can also be spread from person to person and can be spread by combs, brushes or scissors used by an infected person.



Risk Controls

- Ensure all tools improperly cleaned and disinfected to prevent outbreaks within the salon or barbershop.
- Use a clean towel for each client. Make sure the protective gown does not come into contact with the neck unless it is a single use gown.

Cleaning the Tools of the Trade

Tools and equipment need to be physically cleaned so that all hair dust and dry scales are removed. Tools and equipment should also be regularly disinfected to help prevent the spread of infection through contact with contaminated surfaces.

To clean equipment, use hot soapy water **before** disinfecting or sterilising it, to remove any residue that may prevent the disinfectant from working. A fresh disinfection solution should be prepared each day and the container should be thoroughly cleaned before refilling. The most effective way of sterilising equipment is to use a bench-top steriliser.

Make sure gloves and eye protection are worn when cleaning potentially contaminated equipment.

Do not reuse equipment that has been contaminated on a client until it has been:

- Washed in hot water and detergent by personnel wearing gloves.
- Dried with a clean cloth.
- Disinfected (using either a chlorine based (hypochlorite) or alcohol disinfectant) used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, then rinsed and dried.

A summary of cleaning, disinfecting and sterilising tools is below. The Health (Hairdressers) Regulations 1980 provides further information on disinfecting requirements [Clause 9 - disinfection of appliances and other equipment](#).

Item	Recommended Cleaning Method
All Appliances, Brushes, Combs and Equipment	Remove all hair, clean and wash after each client in hot soapy water (temperature of at least 43c)
All brushes, Tools, Instruments and Utensils	At the end of each day, and immediately after use on a person with inflamed or suppurating skin, be washed in detergent (temperature of at least 43c), then rendered hygienic by either: Immersion in boiling water for at least five minutes. Immersion in suitable disinfectant for at least 15 minutes. Exposure to at least 15 minutes of UV radiation. Exposure to confined live steam for at least five minutes.
Shaving Brushes, Mugs and Sponges	Rendered hygienic by immersion in boiling water for at least five minutes after each use.



Item	Recommended Cleaning Method
All Appliances, Brushes, Combs and Equipment	Cleaned by thoroughly brushing the teeth with a clean brush to remove the hair, then wiping the blades with clean cotton wool or clean cloth saturated in disinfecting fluid.
All Brushes, Tools, Instruments and Utensils	Wash in hot water after each client.
Shaving Brushes, Mugs and Sponges	Wipe with hot soapy water and disinfectant.
Electrical Clippers and Shavers, and other appliances with non-detachable parts	Clean and remove all hair, and disinfect.
Towels, Gowns and Nets	Disinfect each week.
Blow Waver, Hair Dryers and Steamers	Clean with a damp cloth and disinfect.
Curling Tongs, Hot Brushes, Thermal Crimpers, and Straighteners	Clean and remove all hair, and disinfect.
Shower Heads	Disinfect each week.
Scissors	Clean with a damp cloth and disinfect.

Cleaning the Salon / Barbershop

The salon or barbershop should be cleaned daily to remove the build-up of dust, dirt. If surfaces have been contaminated or if you have a large number of people coming in daily, equipment and work surfaces should be disinfected at the end of each day.

The most important areas to clean are the 'high touch' surfaces, such as tabletops, benches, door handles, light switches, toilets, taps, kitchen surfaces and cupboard / drawer handles. Make sure you also clean areas that are visibly dirty.

All tools and equipment should be stored appropriately at the end of each day, and workstations prepared for the following day.

Make sure you also clean the lunchroom, other rest areas and bathrooms.

Further guidance is available from the Ministry of Health [Resources on infection control and prevention | Ministry of Health NZ](#).



4.11 Skin Disorders: Dermatitis

Frequent hand washing and chemical use can result in skin disorders. Research indicates that up to 70% of hairdressers and barbers will suffer some form of work-related skin damage.

Dermatitis is one of the more common skin disorders. Dermatitis is a skin inflammation that occurs when your skin comes into direct contact with an irritant. The irritant damages the outer layer of the skin, causing redness, itching, burning or stinging and can lead to your skin becoming blistered, dry and cracked. Dermatitis causes personal suffering. It is unsightly and unpleasant, and it is bad for your career as well as your skin. In salons and barbershops, it is likely to be caused by:

- Frequent contact with water.
- Contact with the chemicals in hair products, including shampoo, bleach or hair colour.
- Contact with cleaning chemicals or detergents.

Not drying your hands properly or having hot and sweaty hands from wearing gloves for long periods of time can also cause skin irritation.

There are two types of dermatitis:

Irritant Contact Dermatitis:	Caused by contact with chemicals within products (including shampoos, conditioners and cleaning agents) and continual wet working. These substances degrease the skin, causing it to dry out, flake, split and crack. If you have sensitive skin, a history of asthma, eczema or hay fever, you may be more prone to dermatitis. Staff that do a lot of basin work (e.g., apprentices) are more likely to be affected.
Allergic Contact Dermatitis:	Caused by contact with chemicals within dyes, tints, perm solutions and bleach. When in contact with the chemical (a 'sensitiser'), a susceptible person can develop an allergic response. This is followed by a sensitisation period varying from days to months or years. Once a person is sensitised, even small doses of the sensitiser may cause the skin to itch, flake, split, crack or blister. This will flare up within a few hours of contact with the chemical and make take days or weeks to settle. Once a worker becomes allergic, they are allergic for life.

Irritant contact dermatitis accounts for 80% of cases and it can be treated and cured. Allergic contact dermatitis accounts for 20% of cases and it cannot be treated. Once you become sensitised, you have it for life and may have no option other than to leave the profession.



Risk Controls

Once you know what the causes are, you can put controls in place to manage the risk. Some risk controls are provided below:

- Avoid known sensitisers, where possible.
- Regularly check your skin for early signs of dermatitis (e.g., redness, burning, stinging, or itching skin on your hands, wrists and arms).
- Report signs of inflammation promptly so it can be managed before the condition gets severe.
- Use barrier cream to reduce contact of chemical with skin.
- Wear disposable non-latex gloves (e.g., nitrile, vinyl, polyethylene based) when rinsing, shampooing, colouring, bleaching, etc.).
- Wear a new pair of gloves for every customer.
- Take regular 'glove breaks', don't spend all day washing hair, alternate duties (e.g., cut hair instead).
- Dry hands thoroughly with a soft cotton or paper towel.
- Skin creams are important as they help to remove contamination from the skin and replace lost oils. Moisturise after washing your hands, as well as at the start and end of each day, with a fragrance-free moisturiser. Make sure that you moisturise all of your hands, wrists and fingers.
- Change gloves between clients, making sure you don't contaminate your hands when taking the gloves off.
- Have skin cream in a form that can be used without cross-contamination between users (e.g., wall dispenser).

Personal Protective Equipment: Gloves

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is recommended as a salon and barbershop health and safety measure where all other control measures are insufficient to reduce the risk to an acceptable level. Protective gloves help to keep water and hair products off your skin and can prevent dermatitis.

Single use, all-round smooth, powder-free, non-latex gloves, ideally around 300mm length (top to tail) are recommended. Choose long-length gloves with folded cuffs to prevent water running down your arm where possible. It is important that gloves fit properly so make sure there is variety of sizes available for workers.

The following products may require glove protection and eye protection. Refer to the relevant Safety Data Sheet:

- Peroxide solutions: 3% to 6%



- Peroxide solutions: 7% to 12%
- Bleach powders
- Acid perms (including ether free)
- Alkaline perms and relaxers
- Hair colour (flammable)
- Hair colour (permanent / semi-permanent whether cream or liquid)
- Hair colour (aerosol)

Shampoos and conditioners also have the words 'gloves recommended' on Safety Data Sheets.

Gloves and Latex Sensitivity

Latex gloves are the most widely available and cost effective of all disposable gloves. Unfortunately many hairdressers and barbers that regularly use latex gloves can develop sensitivity to latex after a period of time. Latex gloves are often lined with corn starch powder, which helps to make them easier to put on, but the latex proteins are absorbed by the corn-starch powder. The powder then irritates the skin, and over time can lead to an allergic reaction. When the gloves are removed the powder can be released into the air and may be inhaled.

Latex sensitivity usually leads to dry, raw skin, most commonly on the hands. Severe allergic reactions can result in sustained dermatitis with blisters and respiratory symptoms.

Low allergen, powder free gloves are available and recommended in salons and barbershops to reduce the chance of a reaction to latex.

4.12 Stress and Fatigue

Hairdressers and barbers often work long hours, including late nights and weekends. While some stress is okay, excessive pressure at work can be harmful to your health. There are many different causes of stress (e.g., overwork, long hours, bullying or harassment by other workers or even clients.) Stress and fatigue can also be caused by factors outside the workplace.

Stress and fatigue can be presented in many different ways. Some of the more common signs include:

- Sleepiness.
- Increased irritability.
- Less conversational or less clear in communication.
- Reduced attention span, more easily distracted.
- Slower reactions, clumsiness, poorer hand-eye coordination, reduced manual skills.



- Reduced short-term memory or being more forgetful.
- Taking more risks or cutting corners to get work completed.

Further information on how to manage stress and fatigue in the workplace is available on WorkSafe's website and in the publication [Healthy work - managing stress and fatigue in the workplace](#) (downloadable from the WorkSafe website).

Managing Stress

Stress is the physical, mental and emotional reaction a person has when we perceive the demands of the work exceed our ability to cope. Excessive stress if prolonged or severe can cause both psychological and physical injury, from sleepless nights and panic attacks to depression, moodiness, and weight loss.

Talk with your workers and identify the cause of the stress. Some examples of causes are included below. These could provide a good starting point to talk with your workers:

- Expectations of long working hours.
- Blurred boundaries about contact outside work hours.
- Too much or too little work.
- Lack of recognition or positive feedback.
- Uncertainty about what is expected or required in the job and the future of the organisation.
- Bullying and / or harassment.
- Poor management styles that do not include consultation.
- Unresolved conflict.
- Poor support for workers experiencing personal or professional difficulties.

Some of the actions you can take to prevent stress in the workplace include:

- Set achievable demands.
- Match workers skills to the work tasks.
- Keep an eye on workload and the type of tasks workers are performing.
- Look out for physical signs of stress.
- Offer support options (e.g., an employee assistance programme).
- Talk with your workers – build good relationships and encourage workers to report workplace stress factors such as work demand, control over their work, role clarity, team culture, bullying and harassment, etc.).



- Have processes in place to manage stress and causes of stress (including bullying and harassment).

Managing Fatigue

Hair industry work usually involve standing or bending over and generally being on your feet for up to eight hours a day and this can take its toll on your body and your wellbeing. To reduce the risk of fatigue, consider the following:

- When the task permits, sit down for work tasks - use an adjustable or ergonomically designed stool or chair to sit on. If the chair your client is sitting on is adjustable, make sure you take the time to adjust it up or down so that you can comfortably reach your client without leaning over, twisting or straining yourself in any way.
- Be kind to your feet - wearing low heeled, comfortable, covered shoes will help reduce fatigue.
- Make sure you take regular rest breaks. You may want to work through to get the job done but these breaks are important for your mental and physical wellbeing.
- Organise your work so you can vary your tasks throughout the day. Doing the same task repetitively can cause strain on your body so break it up with other small tasks in between.

Consider how to incorporate rest breaks into your work practices. An example is provided in the table below:

Type of Break	Why it is Needed
Micropause (a few seconds every three minutes)	To allow blood to flow in muscles that have been held tight and to refresh the small (non-postural) muscles involved in rapid, repetitive movements of cutting and combing.
One Minute Rest Every 20 Minutes	To give large postural muscles a break. Walk around to stretch the muscles that have been held in one position for a time.
10 to 15 Minutes Every Three Hours	To promote recovery time.

4.13 Lone Working

People who work alone may be at increased risk of harm as some work tasks are more challenging to do unaccompanied (e.g., moving heavy furniture or using hazardous substances). Lone workers can be at greater risk of threats, verbal or physical violence. This can affect workers physically and mentally, resulting in increased stress levels, decreased emotional wellbeing, reduced coping strategies and lower work performance.

Make sure you understand the situations where people work alone and do a risk assessment. Consider if there are any additional health and safety risks that could arise from work being done by workers in lone / unaccompanied situations.



It is safer if more than one person opens or closes the salon or barbershop, but this is not always possible. Have opening and closing procedures in place. Procedures should cover checking to make sure:

- There are no suspicious people or vehicles around when you enter or leave the salon or barbershop.
- Before leaving, that all entries, exits and windows are securely locked and the safe (if applicable) is also locked.
- There are no unauthorised persons remaining in the salon.

Workers should be involved when considering the potential risks and control measures that will be put in place to control them. Consider the following:

- Is your salon or barbershop open during the day or do you have workers on late nights?
- What is the risk of violence and / or aggression? Consider daytime and night time. The risk of threats, violence or robbery may be greater at night time.
- Is there a safe way in and out of the workplace (e.g., a back entrance if there is a threat)?
- Are any workers more vulnerable than others and be particularly at risk if they work alone (e.g., if they are young, pregnant, have a medical condition, are disabled, or a trainee)?
- Does the workplace present other specific risks to the lone worker, for example handling equipment, such as portable ladders or trestles, that one person could have difficulty handling?
- Are chemicals or hazardous substances being used that may pose a particular risk someone working alone?
- If the lone worker's first language is not English, are suitable arrangements in place to ensure clear communications, especially in an emergency?
- Workplaces that handle cash are more likely to face the threat of robbery or attack. To reduce the risk of injury or harm, have cash handling procedures in place and train workers in these procedures (include the removal of excess cash from the till to safe storage, not handling cash in front of customers, and how to deliver and deposit of money at the bank).