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FREE EBOOK

ENGLISH, CAREERS AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS

Hygiene, Safety and Client Care in a Salon

Clean tools, safe practice and good service

INSIDE THIS BOOK

- Why hygiene matters
- Hand washing and personal hygiene
- Cleaning, disinfecting and sterilising
- Tools, single-use items and linen
- ...and 7 more chapters, practice questions and a glossary

Beginner

Beautician students and salon staff

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Hygiene, Safety and Client Care in a Salon

A practical guide for beautician students and salon staff. You will learn to keep hands, tools, towels and the work area clean, to use wax, electrical tools and hair chemicals safely, and to give first aid for small cuts, burns and allergic reactions. It also covers consultations, record cards, privacy, complaints and a daily opening and closing checklist.

WHO IT IS FOR	Beautician students and salon staff
LEVEL	Beginner
SUBJECT AREA	English, careers and vocational skills
WHAT IS INSIDE	11 chapters, practice questions with answers, and a glossary

HOW TO USE IT

Read one chapter at a time and try the examples as you go: on a computer, at your workbench or in your notebook. The boxes give tips, safety points and short activities. When you finish, test yourself with the practice questions and check your answers at the end. Words you may not know are explained in the glossary.



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Why hygiene matters

Every day a salon welcomes many people. Each one trusts you with their skin, hair, nails and sometimes their eyes. **Hygiene** means keeping yourself, your tools and your salon so clean that nobody picks up an infection there. An **infection** is an illness caused by germs getting into the body.

Good hygiene protects your clients, your co-workers and you. It also protects the salon's name. One client who gets a rash or a fungal infection will tell many others.

Germs you cannot see

Germs are living things too small to see without a microscope. Four groups matter in a salon.

Germ	What it is	Problems it can cause
Bacteria	Tiny single cells. Most are harmless; some cause illness	Boils, infected cuts, impetigo (a skin infection with crusty sores)
Viruses	Even smaller. They can grow only inside living cells	Warts, cold sores, hepatitis B and C, HIV
Fungi	Moulds and yeasts	Ringworm (an itchy, ring-shaped patch on the skin or scalp), nail infections
Parasites	Tiny animals that live on or in people	Head lice, scabies (very itchy skin caused by mites)

How germs travel

Germs need a way to move from one person to the next. In a salon they travel on:

- **hands** that touch one client and then another;
- **tools** such as combs, scissors, nail files and tweezers;
- **towels and capes** used for more than one person;
- **surfaces** such as chairs, headrests, trolleys and wash basins;
- **blood**, even a tiny drop from a nick with a razor;
- **droplets** from coughs and sneezes.

You cannot stop germs from existing. You can break the chain by cleaning hands, tools and surfaces between every client.

DID YOU KNOW

The hepatitis B virus can survive in dried blood on a surface for at least a week. A razor or nail tool that looks clean can still carry it. This is why blades are never reused.

When not to carry on with a service

A **contraindication** is a reason why a service should not be done, or should be changed. Look before you start. Stop and think if you see:

- open cuts, sores or broken skin in the area;
- redness, swelling, heat or pus;
- a rash, or patches that look like ringworm;
- lice or nits (lice eggs, which look like tiny white specks stuck to the hair);
- red, sticky or watery eyes, before eye treatments.

You are not a doctor, so never tell a client what disease they have. Speak quietly and kindly. Say what you see, explain why you would rather not go ahead, and suggest they see a doctor. Offer a new appointment.

EXAMPLE

Sana works in a salon in Lucknow. While combing a client's hair, she sees tiny white specks stuck close to the scalp behind the ears. She stops, and says softly, "I can see something here that may be nits. It's very common and easy to treat, but I can't do the haircut today. Shall we book you in for next week?" Afterwards she puts the towel and cape in the laundry bag, cleans and disinfects the comb, and wipes the chair.

REMEMBER

Germs are invisible. A tool or towel can look clean and still spread infection. Clean every time, not only when something looks dirty.

Hand washing and personal hygiene

Your hands touch every client, every tool and every surface. Clean hands are the single most useful habit in a salon.

When to wash your hands

- before and after every client;
- after using the toilet, eating or smoking;
- after touching your face, hair, nose or phone;
- after handling money, rubbish or dirty towels;
- after taking off gloves;
- after cleaning with any chemical.

How to wash your hands

1. Wet your hands with clean running water.
2. Put on enough soap to cover both hands.
3. Rub palm to palm.
4. Rub the back of each hand with the other palm, with fingers spread between each other.
5. Rub palm to palm again, with fingers in between.
6. Rub the backs of your fingers against the opposite palm, with fingers locked together.
7. Hold each thumb in the other hand and rub it with a turning movement.
8. Rub your fingertips in small circles in the opposite palm.
9. Rub each wrist.
10. Rinse well under running water.
11. Dry with a clean towel or a paper towel. Use the towel to turn off the tap.

The rubbing should take at least 20 seconds. That is about as long as humming "Happy Birthday" twice.

TIP

Most people miss the thumbs, the fingertips and the skin between the fingers. These are exactly the parts that touch a client's face. Give them extra time.

Hand sanitiser

A **hand sanitiser** is a gel or liquid that kills many germs on the skin. Choose one with at least 60% alcohol. Rub it over every part of both hands until they are dry. Sanitiser is useful between clients when your hands look clean. It does not work well on hands that are dirty or greasy, for example after colouring or waxing. Then wash with soap and water.

Gloves

Wear single-use gloves for waxing, colouring, bleaching, cleaning with disinfectant, and any task where you may touch blood. Also wear them if you have a cut on your hand. **Nitrile** gloves (a type of synthetic rubber) suit people who are allergic to latex.

- Put gloves on clean, dry hands.
- Use a new pair for every client.
- To take them off, pinch the outside of one glove at the wrist and peel it off inside out. Slide a finger of the bare hand inside the other glove and peel it off too.
- Throw them away and wash your hands.

Gloves do not replace hand washing. Germs on your hands can grow inside a warm glove.

Your own grooming

- Keep your nails short and clean. Long nails trap dirt and can scratch.
- Tie long hair back so it does not touch the client.
- Wear a clean uniform or apron every day.
- Cover any cut on your hands with a waterproof plaster.
- Keep jewellery simple. Rings trap germs and can catch on skin or hair.
- Do not eat or drink at the work station.
- If you have a fever, a stomach upset or an eye infection, tell your manager before you come in.

REMEMBER

A client judges a salon by what they see first: your hands, your nails, your hair and your uniform. Clean and neat tells them that the tools will be clean too.

Cleaning, disinfecting and sterilising

These three words are often mixed up, but they mean different things. A good beautician knows which one each tool needs.

	Cleaning	Disinfecting	Sterilising
What it does	Removes dirt, hair, oil, product and many germs	Kills most germs on a non-living surface	Kills all germs, including tough spores
How it is done	Soap or detergent, water and a brush	A disinfectant liquid at the right strength, for the right time	An autoclave or other equipment made for sterilising
Example	Washing a comb in soapy water	Soaking the clean comb in disinfectant	Metal tools treated in an autoclave

A **spore** is a resting form of some bacteria with a tough outer coat. Spores survive many cleaning methods. An **autoclave** is a machine that heats tools with steam under pressure, which kills spores too.

REMEMBER

An **antiseptic** is made for skin, for example to clean the skin before waxing. A **disinfectant** is made for tools and surfaces. Never put a disinfectant on skin.

Always clean first

Disinfectant cannot reach germs hidden under hair, wax or hair colour. So a tool must always be cleaned before it is disinfected. For a comb:

1. Pull out all the hair.
2. Scrub it in warm soapy water with a small brush.
3. Rinse it in clean water.
4. Put it fully under the disinfectant for the time the label says.
5. Take it out with clean hands or tongs. Rinse it if the label says so, and dry it with a clean towel.
6. Store it in a clean, closed box marked "Clean".

Using a disinfectant correctly

- **Read the label.** It tells you how much to mix, how long the item must stay wet (the **contact time**) and what it can be used on.
- **Measure, never guess.** Too weak, and it will not kill germs. Too strong, and it can damage tools, irritate skin and waste money.
- **Mix it fresh** as often as the label says, and change it at once if it looks cloudy or has hair floating in it.
- **Label the container** with the name of the product and the date you mixed it.
- **Wear gloves** while mixing and using it.
- **Never mix two cleaning chemicals.** Bleach mixed with ammonia, or with acid cleaners, gives off poisonous gases.

EXAMPLE

Lakshmi's disinfectant bottle says, "Mix 20 ml in 1 litre of water." (These numbers are only an example. Always follow your own product's label.) Her jar holds 2 litres, so she measures $2 \times 20 = 40$ ml. For the small 500 ml jar on the nail desk, she needs half of 20 ml, which is 10 ml. If a 1-litre bottle costs her ₹ 400, one bottle makes 50 litres of solution. That is only ₹ 8 a litre, which is very little to pay for safety.

What about sterilising?

Tools that go through skin, or may touch blood, need the highest level of care. Many salons now use single-use, pre-sterilised items for these jobs instead.

- Only an autoclave, or other equipment made and tested for sterilising, sterilises.
- A **UV cabinet** (a box with an ultraviolet lamp) is a good place to store tools that are already clean and disinfected. It does not sterilise them, and it does not replace cleaning.
- Boiling water kills many germs but not all spores, so it is not sterilising.

TRY THIS

Make a small card for your station with three words and arrows: **Clean → Disinfect → Store.** Look at it every time you finish with a tool until the habit is automatic.

Tools, single-use items and linen

Every item in a salon falls into one of two groups. Either it can be cleaned and disinfected, or it must be used once and thrown away.

Single-use items

A **single-use** item is used for one client and then thrown away (or given to the client to take home). If something is soft, porous or cannot be fully cleaned, it is single-use. Examples:

- razor blades;
- wooden spatulas for waxing;
- wax strips;
- cotton pads, cotton buds and neck strips;
- gloves and paper towels;
- disposable mascara wands and applicators;
- emery boards and soft nail buffers;
- toe separators and make-up sponges.

Blades and sharps

Open a new blade for every client, in front of them if possible. Put used blades straight into a **sharps container**: a strong box with a lid that a blade cannot cut through. Never throw a blade into an ordinary dustbin, where a cleaner could be cut. Close and replace the container when it is about three-quarters full, and dispose of it the way your local rules say.

DID YOU KNOW

Many clients now ask their barber or beautician to open a new blade in front of them. Do it without being asked. It shows that you take their safety seriously.

Caring for tools

Tool	After every client	Extra care
Combs and brushes	Remove hair, wash, disinfect, dry	Replace when teeth or bristles break
Scissors	Wipe off hair, clean, disinfect the blades	A drop of oil at the pivot; store closed in a case; sharpen only by a professional

Tool	After every client	Extra care
Clippers and trimmers	Brush hair off the blades; use a spray or wipe made for clippers	Oil the blades as the maker says
Metal nail tools and tweezers	Clean, then disinfect or sterilise	Dry fully to stop rust
Make-up brushes	Clean with brush cleaner; wash with mild shampoo regularly	Dry flat or bristles down, so water does not loosen the glue in the handle
Colour bowls and brushes	Wash right after use	Replace cracked bowls

Make-up hygiene

- Never apply straight from a shared lipstick, cream or gloss. Take a little out with a clean spatula onto a palette.
- Use a fresh disposable wand for mascara every time. Never dip a used wand back into the tube.
- Sharpen pencil liners before each client to expose a fresh surface.
- Throw away any product that smells strange or has changed texture.

Towels and linen

- Use a fresh towel for every client. Put a neck strip or clean towel at the neck so that the cape does not touch the client's skin.
- Put used towels straight into a laundry bin with a lid, never over the back of a chair.
- Wash towels in hot water with detergent and dry them completely, in the sun if possible. Damp towels grow mould and smell bad.
- Fold clean towels and keep them in a closed cupboard, away from dust and hair.
- Towels with blood on them go into a separate bag and are washed separately, on a hot wash.

EXAMPLE

Farida's salon in Bhopal sees about 18 clients on a busy Sunday. Each client uses about 2 towels, so 36 towels are used in a day. While those are being washed and dried, she needs another 36 ready for the next day, plus about 10 spare. That makes about 80 towels. At ! 120 a towel (an example price), the set costs about ! 9,600. Buying enough towels at the start stops staff from reusing a damp one.

Waxing safety

Waxing removes hair from the root using warm wax. It is popular and quick, but the wax is hot, the skin can be lifted or torn, and a shared wax pot can spread germs. Safe waxing starts before the heater is even switched on.

The consultation before waxing

Ask the client about the area to be waxed, and look at it. Do not wax over:

- cuts, scratches, rashes or broken skin;
- sunburnt, swollen or inflamed skin;
- moles or warts;
- **varicose veins** (swollen, twisted veins that stand out under the skin, often on the legs).

Also ask about:

- **Strong skin medicines.** Some acne creams and tablets, and some prescription skin creams, make the skin thin and easy to tear. If a client uses one, do not wax that area until they have checked with their doctor.
- **Diabetes or poor blood flow.** The skin may heal slowly, so ask the client to check with their doctor first.
- **Recent hair removal** on the same area, such as shaving, threading or laser.

SAFETY

If you are not sure whether waxing is safe, do not do it. Offer a different service, or ask the client to come back after seeing a doctor. A missed booking is better than torn skin.

Preparing the wax

1. Place the heater on a flat, steady surface. Keep the cord where nobody can trip over it.
2. Heat the wax to the temperature the maker recommends. Do not overheat it.
3. Stir it, and test a little on the inside of your own wrist. Then test a small patch on the client's skin and ask how it feels.
4. Make sure the client's skin is clean and dry.

Applying and removing strip wax

1. Put on gloves.

2. Dip a clean spatula and wipe off the extra wax on the edge of the pot.
3. Spread a thin layer **in the direction the hair grows**.
4. Press a strip on top, also in the direction of growth, and rub it firmly.
5. Hold the skin tight with your other hand.
6. Pull the strip off quickly, **against** the direction of growth, keeping it low and close to the skin. Never pull straight upwards.
7. Press your palm on the area for a moment to calm it.

Hard wax is spread thicker, allowed to set, and then lifted off without a strip. It is often used on small, sensitive areas such as the upper lip.

No double-dipping

Never put a spatula back into the wax pot once it has touched skin. Use a fresh spatula for every dip. The pot is shared by every client who comes in, and a used spatula carries skin cells, body fluids and germs back into it.

Aftercare advice

Tell the client to avoid these for the next 24 hours: hot baths, steam, saunas, swimming, strong sun, perfumed products and very tight clothes. They should not scratch or pick at the skin.

TIP

Write the aftercare points on a small printed card and hand it over at the end. Clients forget spoken advice, but they keep a card.

REMEMBER

If hot wax burns the skin, stop at once and follow the burns first aid in this book. Do not peel off wax that has stuck to burnt skin.

CHAPTER 6

Electrical equipment safety

A salon is full of electrical tools: hair dryers, straighteners, curling tongs, facial steamers, wax heaters and clippers. Electricity can give a shock, and hot tools can burn. Water, which is everywhere in a salon, makes both dangers worse.

Check before you switch on

Look at each tool before you use it.

- Is the cord cut, cracked, or wrapped in tape?
- Is the plug broken, loose, or marked with black burn marks?
- Does the tool smell of burning, spark, or make a strange noise?
- Is the air filter at the back of the dryer blocked with lint (fluff)? A blocked filter makes the dryer overheat.

If you find a fault, unplug the tool, put a "Do not use" label on it, and tell the manager. Only a qualified electrician should repair it. Never try to fix it yourself.

EXAMPLE

Kiran opens a salon in Pune at 9 a.m. During her morning check she notices that the cord of one hair dryer is split near the handle and the copper wire is showing. She does not wrap it with tape. She unplugs it, ties a "Do not use" tag on it, puts it in the manager's cupboard, and writes it in the repairs book.

Using electrical tools safely

- Keep water, spray bottles and wet towels away from sockets and tools.
- Dry your hands before touching a plug or switch.
- Do not overload a socket with many adaptors. A plug or adaptor that feels warm is a warning sign.
- Unplug by holding the plug, never by pulling the cord.
- Keep cords off walkways. Do not wind a cord tightly round a hot tool.
- Rest hot tools on a heat-proof mat or stand. Let them cool before putting them away.
- Switch off tools you are not using.
- Keep hot tools away from the client's ears, neck and scalp, and use a heat setting that suits the hair.
- Use a facial steamer only as the maker says: fill it with the right water, keep it at the stated distance from the face, and never leave a client alone with it running.

Safety switches

Ask the salon owner to have an electrician fit a **safety switch** such as an RCCB. It cuts off the power very quickly if electricity leaks to earth, for example through a person's body. These switches have a test button. It should be pressed regularly, as the maker suggests, to check that the switch still works.

SAFETY

If someone gets an electric shock, do not touch them while they may still be touching the tool or wire. You could get a shock too. Switch off at the main switch or pull out the plug if you can do so safely. Then call for help on 112.

DID YOU KNOW

Most burns in salons come from hot tools, not from electricity itself. A straightener resting on a towel, or a curling tong left on the station, can burn a hand that reaches past it.

CHAPTER 7

Hair colour, bleach and patch tests

Salons use many chemicals: hair colour, bleach (also called lightener), developer (a hydrogen peroxide liquid that is mixed with colour or bleach), perm and smoothening products, nail polish remover and disinfectants. Used correctly, they are safe. Used carelessly, they can burn skin, harm eyes and cause allergies.

Handling chemicals safely

- Read the instructions and safety information for every product. Follow the mixing amounts and timings exactly.
- Wear gloves and an apron. Protect the client with a cape and a towel.
- Mix in a room with good fresh air. Do not breathe in the dust from powder bleach.
- Use the bowl and brush the maker recommends. Many say plastic or glass, not metal.
- Mix just before use and throw away leftovers. Mixed colour cannot be saved for later.
- Never mix products of different brands or types unless the instructions say you may.
- Close lids tightly. Store chemicals in their own labelled containers, in a cool, dry, locked cupboard, away from sunlight, heat, food and children.
- Never pour a chemical into a drink bottle.

SAFETY

If a chemical splashes into an eye, rinse it with plenty of clean running water for at least 20 minutes, holding the eyelids open. Then get medical help. Take the product container with you so the doctor can read the label.

The patch test

Many hair dyes contain chemicals such as **PPD** (para-phenylenediamine) that some people are allergic to. An **allergy** is when the body reacts strongly to something that is harmless to most people. A person can become allergic even after using the same dye for years with no trouble. That is why most makers say a **patch test** (also called a skin allergy test) must be done 48 hours before **every** colour service, even for regular clients.

Follow the maker's instructions. In general:

1. Clean a small area of skin behind the ear or on the inside of the elbow.
2. Apply a small amount of the product, prepared as the instructions say.
3. Let it dry. Ask the client not to wash, cover or scratch it.
4. Ask the client to watch the area for 48 hours and to call you if it itches, turns red, swells or blisters.
5. If there is any reaction, **do not colour**. Write it on the record card and advise the client to see a doctor if it is strong.
6. If there is no reaction, write down the date, product and result, and go ahead with the service.

The strand test

A **strand test** is different. It shows how a colour or bleach will work on the hair. Apply the product to a small, hidden strand, time it, rinse, and check the colour and the condition of the hair. A patch test checks the skin; a strand test checks the hair.

Bleach safety

- Do not apply bleach on a scalp that has cuts, sores, sunburn or irritation.
- Check the hair often and never leave the product on longer than the maker says.
- If the client feels burning, rinse it off at once with cool water.
- Ask about past treatments. Hair coloured with henna or other products can react unexpectedly, so do a strand test first.

DID YOU KNOW

Natural henna (mehndi) stains the skin orange to reddish-brown. "Black henna" often has PPD added to make a dark stain quickly, and it can cause severe skin reactions. A client who once reacted to a black henna tattoo may also react to hair dye, so always ask.

REMEMBER

No patch test, no colour. It takes two minutes to apply and can save a client from a serious reaction.

CHAPTER 8

First aid for cuts, burns and allergic reactions

First aid is the help you give someone who is hurt or unwell until a doctor or ambulance takes over. Every salon needs a first aid box, a person who knows how to use it, and an accident book where every incident is written down.

The first aid box

- disposable gloves;
- sterile gauze pads and a crepe bandage;
- waterproof plasters in different sizes;
- adhesive tape and small scissors;
- cling film (for covering burns);
- sterile eyewash or saline;
- sealable plastic bags for used dressings;
- a card with emergency phone numbers.

Check it every month. Replace anything that has been used or has passed its expiry date.

Small cuts

1. Stop the service and stay calm. Reassure the client.
2. Put on gloves.
3. Press firmly on the cut with clean gauze.
4. If the cut is on a hand or arm, raise it.
5. When the bleeding stops, clean around it gently and cover it with a plaster. Ask first whether the client is allergic to plasters.
6. Throw away the blade and the gauze safely. Clean and disinfect the tools and the surface.

7. Write it in the accident book.

Get medical help if bleeding does not stop after 10 minutes of firm pressure, or if the cut is deep, gaping or dirty.

Cleaning up blood: wear gloves, soak it up with paper towels, put them in a sealed bag, clean the area with detergent, then disinfect it with a product suitable for blood spills. Wash your hands afterwards.

SAFETY

If you cut yourself on a blade that has already been used on a client, let the wound bleed gently under running water and wash it with soap. Do not scrub it or suck it. Cover it, tell your manager, and get medical advice the same day. A doctor may advise treatment that works best if started early.

Burns

1. Cool the burn under cool running water for 20 minutes.
2. Take off rings or bracelets near the burn before it swells, unless they are stuck to the skin.
3. Do not put on ice, butter, oil, toothpaste or any cream.
4. Cover it loosely with strips of cling film or a clean dressing that does not shed fluff.
5. Do not burst any blisters.

Get medical help if the burn is bigger than the person's palm, looks deep, is on the face, hands, feet or private parts, or was caused by a chemical or electricity. For a **chemical burn**, wear gloves, brush off any powder, take off splashed clothing carefully, and rinse the skin under running water for at least 20 minutes.

Allergic reactions

A **mild reaction** shows as redness, itching or a small rash where a product touched the skin. Stop the service, rinse the product off with plenty of water, and put a cool, damp cloth on the area. Do not continue. Write it down, and suggest the client sees a doctor if it does not settle.

A **severe reaction**, called **anaphylaxis**, is an emergency. Look for:

- swelling of the lips, tongue, face or throat;
- difficulty breathing, wheezing or a hoarse voice;
- a rash spreading over the body;

- feeling faint, looking pale, or collapsing.

Call 112 at once. If the person carries an adrenaline auto-injector (an emergency pen for allergies), help them use it. Let them sit up if breathing is hard, or lie down with legs raised if they feel faint. Stay with them until help arrives.

EXAMPLE

At a salon in Kochi, a client's face turns red and blotchy a few minutes into a facial, and she says her throat feels tight. Anu, the beautician, stops at once, wipes the product off and calls 112. She sits the client upright, opens a window, and stays with her, while a co-worker waits at the door for the ambulance.

REMEMBER

You are not a doctor. Your job is to keep the person safe, act quickly and get help early.

CHAPTER 9

Client consultation and records

A **consultation** is a short talk before every service. It helps you understand what the client wants, check that the service is safe for them, and agree on what will be done. Even regular clients need a quick consultation, because health, medicines and wishes change.

Steps of a good consultation

1. Greet the client by name and seat them comfortably.
2. Ask what they would like. Look at pictures together if they have any.
3. Ask about their lifestyle. For example: how much time do they spend on their hair each morning?
4. Ask health questions that matter for this service: allergies, skin or scalp problems, medicines, and recent treatments. Some treatments are not suitable during pregnancy, and product instructions will tell you which.
5. With permission, look at and touch the hair, skin or nails.
6. Explain honestly what can be achieved. If something is not safe or not possible, say why.
7. Agree on the service, the time it will take and the price **before** you start.
8. Write it down and ask the client to read and sign the record card.
9. At the end, give aftercare advice.

Asking good questions

An **open question** cannot be answered with just "yes" or "no". It gets the client talking: "How does your skin feel after you wash it?" A **closed question** gets a short, clear answer: "Have you ever reacted to a hair dye?" Use both. Open questions find out what the client wants; closed questions check the safety facts.

TIP

Repeat the main points back to the client before you begin: "So we are trimming 2 inches, keeping the layers, and no colour today. Is that right?" Most complaints start with a misunderstanding.

The record card

A **record card** holds the details of each client and each visit. It can be on paper or on a computer. Here is an example.

Field	Entry
Name	Pooja Mehta
Phone	(kept on card)
Date	4 October
Service	Root touch-up
Patch test	Done 2 October; no reaction
Product and shade	Brand and shade code written here
Time on hair	As per instructions; 35 minutes
Notes	Sensitive scalp near hairline; use barrier cream
Price agreed	! 1,200 (example)
Client signature	Signed
Staff	Divya

Update the card at every visit. Write clearly, so another staff member can read it next time. A good record card means you can repeat a colour the client loved, and avoid a product they reacted to.

TRY THIS

Design your own one-page record card for a facial. Include allergies, skin type, products used, any reaction, the date of the next visit, and a space for the client's signature.

CHAPTER 10

Privacy, respect and handling complaints

Clean tools bring a client in once. The way you treat them brings them back.

Keeping information private

- A client's phone number, address, health details and photos belong to the client.
- Keep record cards in a locked drawer, or on a computer or phone with a password.
- Never discuss a client's treatment, health or personal life with other clients, friends or family.
- Ask health questions in a quiet voice, or in a private corner.
- Ask permission before taking any photo, even of hair alone. Show the client the photo. Never post it on social media without clear permission, and delete it if they ask.

Showing respect

- Greet warmly, use polite words, and listen without interrupting.
- Explain before you touch: "I'm going to tilt your head back now."
- Protect modesty. Do waxing and body treatments in a private room or behind a curtain, let the client change in private, and cover them with towels.
- Respect religious and cultural wishes. Some clients prefer a woman beautician; some have rules about hair or clothing. Ask, and adjust where you can.
- Treat every client equally, whatever their age, religion, caste, language, body shape or disability. Never comment on their looks in a hurtful way.
- Do not gossip, and keep your phone away while working.
- Be on time, and tell the client early if there is a delay.

DID YOU KNOW

Clients often share personal news while they sit in the chair. Keeping those secrets is part of the job, just as it is for a doctor.

Handling complaints

Even in the best salon, a client is sometimes unhappy. A complaint handled well can make a client more loyal than before. A simple method is **LAST**:

1. **Listen.** Let the client speak fully. Do not interrupt or argue.
2. **Apologise.** "I'm sorry you're not happy with it." This is not admitting fault; it shows you care.
3. **Solve.** Check the problem, offer a fair solution that your salon allows, or call the manager.
4. **Thank.** Thank the client for telling you, so you can put it right.

EXAMPLE

Ritu, a client in Jaipur, returns the next day. Her highlights look more orange than she wanted. Neha listens, says sorry, and looks at the hair in daylight. With her manager's agreement, she offers to tone the highlights at no extra charge. She writes the complaint and the action on Ritu's record card and thanks her for coming back instead of going elsewhere.

Do not:

- argue, raise your voice or blame the client;
- make promises you cannot keep;
- talk about the complaint in front of other clients.

If a client becomes abusive or threatening, stay calm and call the manager. Write every complaint down with the date, what happened and what was done. If the same problem comes up again and again, the salon has something to fix.

REMEMBER

Listen, Apologise, Solve, Thank. Most unhappy clients want to feel heard first and helped second.

CHAPTER 11

Daily opening and closing checklist

Good hygiene is not one big clean. It is many small jobs done every day, in the same order, by everyone. A written checklist makes sure nothing is forgotten, even on the busiest day.

Before the first client

Task	Done
Open windows or switch on ventilation; switch on lights	☐
Check floors, mirrors, chairs and basins are clean	☐
Mix fresh disinfectant and write the date on the container	☐
Check there are enough clean towels and neck strips	☐
Check electrical tools, cords and plugs	☐
Check the first aid box is complete	☐
Check the sharps container is less than three-quarters full	☐
Read the day's appointments; check patch test results	☐
Wash hands; put on a clean uniform	☐

Between clients

1. Remove used towels, neck strips and single-use items.
2. Clean and disinfect the tools you used.
3. Wipe the chair, headrest, trolley and basin.
4. Sweep up hair. Hair on the floor is slippery and unhygienic.
5. Wash your hands before greeting the next client.

At closing time

Task	Done
Clean and disinfect all tools; store them dry in closed containers	☐
Wash and dry towels, or bag them for the laundry	☐
Empty all bins and tie the bags	☐
Clean basins, mirrors and work stations; mop the floor	☐
Switch off and unplug every tool, heater and steamer; check hot tools have cooled	☐
Close chemical containers and lock them away	☐
Lock away record cards	☐

Task	Done
Note tomorrow's patch tests and bookings	☐
Check taps, fans and lights are off; lock windows and doors	☐

Once a week

- Deep clean trolleys, drawers and shelves.
- Clean dryer filters.
- Wash all make-up brushes thoroughly.
- Check the first aid box and expiry dates.
- Check stock of gloves, blades, spatulas and disinfectant.

EXAMPLE

Divya manages a small salon in Coimbatore. She prints the checklists on one sheet for each day. The person who opens signs the top half and the person who closes signs the bottom half. At the end of the month, she can see at a glance whether any job was missed, and on which day.

TIP

Stick the checklist inside a cupboard door where staff see it every day. A checklist hidden in a file is soon forgotten.

REMEMBER

Clients may never see your checklist, but they will notice the result: a fresh towel, a clean comb and a salon that smells clean.

CHECK YOURSELF

Practice questions

1. What does hygiene mean in a salon?
2. Name the four groups of germs and give one problem each can cause.
3. What is a contraindication? Give two examples.
4. A client has signs of nits. What should you say and do?

5. For how long should you rub your hands when washing them, and which parts are most often missed?
6. When is hand sanitiser not enough?
7. How do you take off gloves without touching their outside with bare skin?
8. Explain the difference between cleaning, disinfecting and sterilising.
9. Why must a tool be cleaned before it is disinfected?
10. A disinfectant label says "20 ml in 1 litre of water". How much do you need for a 3-litre jar?
11. Does a UV cabinet sterilise tools? What is it good for?
12. List five single-use items.
13. What is a sharps container, and when should it be replaced?
14. Why is double-dipping in a wax pot dangerous?
15. In which direction do you apply soft wax, and in which direction do you remove the strip?
16. Give four checks to make on an electrical tool before using it.
17. Someone has had an electric shock and may still be touching the tool. What must you do first?
18. When must a patch test be done before a colour service, and why even for regular clients?
19. What is the difference between a patch test and a strand test?
20. Give the first aid steps for a small burn from a curling tong.
21. List three signs of a severe allergic reaction, and what you should do.
22. What do the letters LAST stand for in handling complaints?
23. Give three ways to keep client information private.

Answers

1. Keeping yourself, your tools and the salon so clean that nobody picks up an infection there.
2. Bacteria (boils, impetigo), viruses (warts, hepatitis B), fungi (ringworm, nail infections) and parasites (head lice, scabies).
3. A reason why a service should not be done, or should be changed. Examples: broken skin, a rash, lice, an eye infection, sunburn before waxing.
4. Speak quietly and kindly, say what you see without naming a disease, explain you cannot do the service today, and offer a new appointment. Then bag the towel and cape, clean and disinfect the comb, and wipe the chair.
5. At least 20 seconds. The thumbs, fingertips and the skin between the fingers are most often missed.
6. When hands are visibly dirty or greasy, for example after colouring or waxing. Then wash with soap and water.
7. Pinch the outside of one glove at the wrist and peel it off inside out. Slide a bare finger inside the other glove at the wrist and peel it off. Throw both away and wash your hands.
8. Cleaning removes dirt, hair and many germs with soap and water. Disinfecting kills most germs on a surface with a chemical. Sterilising kills all germs, including spores, using an autoclave or similar equipment.
9. Hair, wax and product hide germs and stop the disinfectant from reaching them.
10. $3 \times 20 = 60$ ml (if that is what your product's label says).
11. No. It is a good place to store tools that are already clean and disinfected.
12. Any five of: razor blades, wooden spatulas, wax strips, cotton pads, neck strips, gloves, paper towels, mascara wands, emery boards, toe separators, make-up sponges.
13. A strong, lidded box that blades cannot cut through. Close and replace it when it is about three-quarters full.
14. A spatula that has touched skin carries skin cells, body fluids and germs into the pot, which is used for every client.
15. Apply in the direction of hair growth. Remove the strip quickly against the growth, low and close to the skin.
16. Any four of: the cord is not cut or taped; the plug is not loose or burnt; there is no burning smell, sparks or strange noise; the dryer filter is not blocked.
17. Do not touch them. Switch off at the main switch or pull the plug if it is safe, then call 112.
18. 48 hours before every colour service, as most makers instruct. A person can become allergic to a dye even after using it for years.
19. A patch test checks the skin for an allergy to the product. A strand test checks how the product will work on the hair.

- 20.** Cool it under cool running water for 20 minutes, remove nearby rings, do not use ice or creams, cover it loosely with cling film or a clean dressing, and do not burst blisters.
- 21.** Any three of: swelling of the lips, tongue or throat; difficulty breathing or wheezing; a spreading rash; feeling faint or collapsing. Call 112, help them use their adrenaline pen if they have one, and stay with them.
- 22.** Listen, Apologise, Solve, Thank.
- 23.** Any three of: keep record cards locked or password-protected; never discuss a client with others; ask health questions quietly; ask permission before taking photos and never post them without permission.

WORD LIST

Glossary

Allergy

a strong reaction by the body to something that is harmless to most people.

Anaphylaxis

a severe allergic reaction that affects breathing or blood pressure and needs emergency help.

Antiseptic

a product that reduces germs on skin.

Autoclave

a machine that sterilises tools with steam under pressure.

Contact time

how long a surface must stay wet with disinfectant for it to work.

Consultation

a short talk before a service to find out what the client wants and whether it is safe.

Contraindication

a reason why a service should not be done, or should be changed.

Disinfectant

a chemical that kills most germs on tools and surfaces, not on skin.

Double-dipping

putting a used spatula back into a shared wax pot.

Hygiene

keeping people, tools and places clean to prevent infection.

Infection

an illness caused by germs getting into the body.

Nits

the eggs of head lice, stuck close to the scalp on the hair.

Nitrile gloves

single-use gloves made of synthetic rubber, suitable for people allergic to latex.

Patch test

a small test of a product on the skin, done before a service to check for an allergy.

PPD

para-phenylenediamine, a chemical in many hair dyes that can cause allergies.

RCCB

a safety switch that cuts off power quickly if electricity leaks to earth.

Record card

a card or file holding a client's details and the record of each visit.

Sharps container

a strong, lidded box for used blades that they cannot cut through.

Single-use item

an item used for one client and then thrown away.

Spore

a resting form of some bacteria with a tough coat that survives many cleaning methods.

Sterilising

killing all germs, including spores.

Strand test

a test on a small strand of hair to see how a colour or bleach will work.



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