

## **Infection Control Best Practices**

The NIC Executive Directors Infection Control Workgroup presented these Infection Control Practices to the NIC Executive Board and received approval. The NIC Executive Directors Group has developed this document with the assistance of subject matter experts, including Leslie Roste, RN, of King Research. Many of these best practices are currently practiced by industry professionals and are implemented in several states' newly adopted rules. The goal of this document is to disseminate proper infection control practices to the masses.

This document provides specific language that *may* be used by a state when writing infection control rules; it is not required or all-inclusive. However, this language, when used provides clear direction to the licensee and is technically and scientifically sound. In many cases, several options are offered – these are not the only options, but the most common or most realistically implemented. Comments in [blue](#) are background or commentary on the rationale for the wording. Sources are documented in [red](#), where necessary

The following topics are included, in the following order:

### **1. Definitions**

- A. Clean
- B. Disinfect
- C. Sterilize
- D. Disinfectant
- E. Porous
- F. Non-porous
- G. Contact time

### **2. General requirements**

- A. Trash containers
- B. Linen containers
- C. Hair disposal
- D. Hand washing
- E. Communicable disease

### **3. Procedures**

- A. Items required to be disinfected
- B. Disinfectant mixing, disposal, labeling, etc.
- C. Cleaning & disinfecting non-porous, reusable items
- D. Cleaning & disinfecting electrical items
- E. Cleaning & disinfecting chairs, tables, shampoo bowls

- F. Hand washing
- G. Single-use items

### **4. Linens**

### **5. Storage**

- A. Used items (“dirty”)
- B. Disinfected items (“clean”)
- C. Linens

### **6. Multi-Use Containers**

### **7. Nail services**

- A. Disinfection of pedicure bowls
- B. Single-use items
- C. Storage of implements and single-use items
- D. Storage of clients' implements (prohibited)

### **8. Make-up services**

### **9. Waxing services**

### **10. Blood exposure procedure**

- A. Client injury
- B. Licensee injury
- C. Disposal of items used in clean up

### **11. Prohibitions**

### **12. Towel warmers**

### **13. Continuing education**

## **1. DEFINITIONS**

It is recommended that the following definitions be addressed (at a minimum) in state regulatory language.

- A. Clean:** Removal of visible/surface debris, washing with soap (or detergent) and water, detergent or chemical “cleaner”. Prepares non-porous items for disinfection. Reduces the number and slows the growth of pathogens on both porous and non-porous surfaces. Cleaning does not make multi-use items safe for use.

**Comment:** “Sanitize” is the reduction and sometimes, destruction of *some* bacteria. It is not effective against the bacteria of concern in the salon environment and does not address viral and fungal threats. Sanitization is not sufficient to make implements safe for use and as such, has been removed from textbook language and the rules of states with recent updates.

The term “clean” is appropriate for porous items such as linens, hand washing and porous or non-contact surfaces (floors, walls, chairs)

- B. Disinfect:** The process of making a non-porous item safe for use. Requires the use of a chemical intended to kill or denature a bacteria, virus or fungus. Items to be disinfected must be cleaned prior to disinfection. UV light is not acceptable for disinfection.

**Comment:** Because disinfection is for non-porous surfaces, it is important to define non-porous as part of definitions. UV light requires a very controlled environment, variable lengths of time and specific wavelengths to work. While there is work going on to determine if UVC could work in the healthcare environment, all of the constraints and costs make it difficult even in that setting. The inability to achieve these criteria in the salon makes this inappropriate for disinfection and as such, UV light boxes have been removed or banned in most states with current updates. Many UV light boxes are marked with “UV Sterilizer” and confuse consumers. In addition the wavelengths that would be appropriate for disinfection of non-porous items have been indicated in increased skin cancer.

- C. Sterilize** (even if not required – define what constitutes sterile): The eradication of all microbial life through the use of heat, steam or chemical sterilants. Autoclaves and/or dry heat sterilizers used to sterilize must be spore tested through an independent lab every 30 days to ensure functionality. Autoclaves and/or dry heat sterilizers used to sterilize must be FDA approved and used only as instructed by the manufacturer. Spore testing results and maintenance records must be kept onsite for 12 months.

**Comment:** Sterilization is appropriate for critical use items (items intended to penetrate the skin – electrolysis, body arts) that are re-used (not single use). Autoclaves / dry heat sterilizers are the only appropriate method to actually sterilize in the salon environment. UV light boxes do not sterilize.

**D. Disinfectant:**

Recommended options:

- EPA registered bactericidal, virucidal and fungicidal disinfectant that is approved for use in hospital settings, following instruction label for dilution ratio and contact time.
- EPA registered Sodium Hypochlorite 5.25% or higher (household bleach) with instructions for disinfection, diluted as instructed on the label and observing the contact time listed on the manufacturers label. Bleach must be active (not expired) with a manufacture date of less than 6 months prior to use.

Not recommended:

- Isopropyl alcohol
- Ethyl Alcohol

**Comment:** Not all bleach disinfects so the requirement for EPA registration ensures that appropriate chlorine bleach is being used. Bleach has a 6-month shelf life so the requirement to check manufacture date ensures that it is not expired.

Alcohol is a poor disinfectant as it has a 20-30 minute contact time and is extremely flammable. The vapor point of alcohols makes achieving the proper contact time nearly impossible. It is important that efficacy statements for salon use include staphylococcus aureus (including MRSA), HIV, and HEPB.

**Resource:** Healthcare “Guideline for Disinfection and Sterilization in Healthcare Facilities, 2008” by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee.

[https://www.cdc.gov/hicpac/Disinfection\\_Sterilization/6\\_0disinfection.html](https://www.cdc.gov/hicpac/Disinfection_Sterilization/6_0disinfection.html)

- E. Porous:** Material that has minute spaces or holes through which liquid or air may pass (permeable, penetrable, cellular).

**Comment:** This includes all paper, cardboard, and cloth items regardless of how they are labeled. It also includes items like pumice stones that allow for fluid and tissue to become trapped in crevices.

- F. Non-porous:** Material that has no pores and does not allow for liquids to be absorbed or pass through. Common non-porous materials include glass, metal and plastic.

**Comment:** Items that are sealed to make them non-porous, become porous when the sealant is worn away – for example, sealed wood on a brush handle is non-porous unless the sealant is worn away.

- G. Contact time:** The amount of moist contact time required for a disinfectant to be effective against the pathogens on the label. Clean items or surfaces must remain completely immersed, or visibly wet if using sprays or wipes, for full contact time to be effective.

**Comment:** EPA registration requires that products prove efficacy for all pathogens listed on label. For all pathogens to be effectively eradicated, the full contact time listed on the manufacturers label must be observed. Contact time varies widely between product types – for example, contact time for wipes is often significantly lower than those for immersion or sprays.

## **2. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

- A. Trash containers:** Trash containers must have solid sides and a liner must (should) be used. Trash containers must be emptied when full – never allowing the lid to be partially open.

There shall be 1 covered trash container for:

- Every 2 chairs in a salon or barbershop.
- Each room used for services – for example, waxing, massage, electrolysis.
- Each nail station.
- Between every 2 pedicure chairs.
- Each restroom, dispense area and any break room where food is prepared.

**Comment:** Trash containers should always be made of solid non-porous materials to reduce the risk of contaminants being spread. Liners reduce the risk, but surfaces such as wicker, provide areas for pathogens to thrive in the trash container. The recommendation for a trash container per every 2 chairs increases compliance with trash disposal rules.

- B. Linen containers:** Containers for soiled linens must be covered and have vented sides to reduce the growth of pathogens. Containers used for soiled linens, must be disinfected weekly with EPA registered disinfectant sprays or wipes, used as directed on manufacturers label.

There shall be 1 covered container for soiled linens (towels, capes, sheets):

- In a salon, barbershop, spa or nail salon.
- In each individual room used for private services – for example, waxing, massage, electrolysis.
- In each room (area) where pedicures are performed.
- In any customer changing area.

**Comment:** Linen containers used for soiled linens should be made of non-porous, vented material. Wet towels, robes and sheets can become a breeding ground for pathogens, particularly fungi - venting reduces that risk because airflow allows for some drying of materials. Liners are not recommended, as that would reduce the airflow. However, gloves when emptying linen containers or hand washing required after should be considered.

- C. Hair disposal:** Immediately following a hair service, all hair on floor, chair and station must be removed and placed in closed trash container.

**Comment:** Hair allowed to accumulate on the floor is a safety hazard for both licensee and consumer.

- D. Hand washing:** All licensees are required to wash hands prior to any service, following eating, smoking or the use of the restroom. Hands must be washed with running water and soap and then dried with a disposable towel. When hand washing is not practical or possible, hand sanitizers (at least 70% alcohol) may be used. However, hand washing is required following the use of the restroom – hand sanitizer is not acceptable. Hand sanitizer should be made available at all nail stations for client use prior to a service.

**Comment:** Antibacterial soap should not be required – it allows for “selection” of bacteria and often contains a product (Triclosan) that is currently banned in Europe, and recently in the US (see FDA ruling below). Hand sanitizer does not “select” and offers a more realistic option in a busy setting where only 1 restroom is available. The goal is to get more people compliant with some form of hand cleaning rather than doing nothing because it is impractical.

**Resources:**

- “Antibacterial Soap? You Can Skip It – Use Plain Soap and Water” by US Food and Drug Administration.  
<http://www.fda.gov/downloads/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/UCM378615.pdf>
- “Five Reasons Why You Should Probably Stop Using Antibacterial Soap” by Smithsonian.  
<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/five-reasons-why-you-should-probably-stop-using-antibacterial-soap-180948078/?no-ist>
- “Antibacterial Household Products: Cause for Concern” by S.B. Levy, US National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health.  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2631814/>

- E. Communicable disease:** Licensees shall not perform any service if they have been diagnosed with a communicable disease until cleared by a medical

professional for return to work. Any licensee with a respiratory illness, regardless of if they have been diagnosed, should consider the use of a facemask to protect clients from the possibility of transmission. Licensee's shall not perform a service on a client who has visible swelling, eruption, redness, bruising on skin or rash in an area where a service is to be performed.

**Comments:** We should not be asking a licensee to diagnose themselves or their clients. These rules should be written to protect both licensees and clients from the most likely pathogens to be transmitted. They should also provide a set of guidelines for licensee to deny services under these rules.

### **3. PROCEDURES**

#### **A. Items required to be disinfected:**

- All non-porous items to be used on multiple clients must be cleaned and disinfected prior to use.
- The non-electrical items required to be cleaned and disinfected prior to use include, but are not limited to, combs, brushes, shears, hair clips, hair rollers, pushers, nippers, plastic/metal spatulas.

#### **B. Disinfectant mixing, disposal, labeling:**

- All disinfectant must be mixed as directed on the manufacturers label.
- All disinfectant used for immersion must be disposed of at the end of the day and fresh disinfectant made at the beginning of each workday. In addition, if disinfectant becomes contaminated or cloudy prior to the end of the day, it must be changed immediately.
- All disinfectant containers must be covered at all times and large enough to completely cover all implements and tools (including the handle) that are placed in the container.
- A manufacturers label for all disinfectant concentrate must be available at all times. If concentrate bottle is emptied, it must remain available until a new bottle is available.
- When mixed disinfectant concentrate is placed in a secondary container such as a spray bottle, tub or jar, that container must be labeled to indicate what chemical is in the container. SDS sheets must be readily available for all disinfectants in use at all times.
- Disinfectants must be disposed of in accordance with all local, state and federal requirements.

**Comment:** SDS Sheets (Safety Data Sheet) replace the MSDS and are required by OSHA to be available at all times to all staff. They cannot be locked in an office after hours or accessed by the internet (unless all staff have access).

#### **C. Cleaning & disinfecting non-porous, reusable items:**

1. Wash item with soap/water or a chemical cleaner/detergent.

2. Rinse item under clean, running water and dry.
3. Disinfect with approved disinfectant:
  - a. Immersion: place item in properly prepared disinfectant so that all surfaces are covered. Allow to remain in the disinfectant for full contact time listed on the label
  - b. Spray: Place item on disinfected surface or clean towel and spray with disinfectant until thoroughly saturated. Ensure that all surfaces of item stay visibly moist for full contact time listed on the label.
  - c. Wipes: Using an EPA registered wipe – wipe surfaces and ensure that all surfaces remain visibly moist for contact time listed on the label. When using a wipe to “clean” and a second wipe to “disinfect”, step #1 & #2 are not required.
4. Remove item(s) and rinse. Allow to air dry or wipe dry with clean paper towel
5. Store disinfected tools in a clean, covered container labeled “disinfected” or “ready to use”.
6. Shears and razors are not required to be immersed, but must be wiped to remove hair, product residue, and skin debris, and then disinfected with an EPA-registered, hospital-level disinfectant, spray or wipe after each use. The surfaces must remain wet with the spray or wipe disinfectant for the contact time listed on the disinfectant label.

**Comment:** There is significant concern that disinfectants rust metals (shears). The disinfectant is not the culprit, but leaving items sitting in liquid (any type) for long periods of time causes rusting of metals. It is not necessary to write separate rules for sheers, but to re-enforce that they should only stay in the liquid for the contact time listed on the manufacturers label.

**D. Cleaning & disinfecting electrical items:**

1. Plastic/metal guards, clipper blades, drill bits and any metal or nonmetal removable parts must be removed, cleaned, and disinfected as follows:
  - a. Remove all debris, such as hair from clippers.
  - b. Use EPA registered spray or wipe as instructed on manufacturers label for full contact time to disinfect entire implement/tool.
  - c. Allow to air dry or wipe dry with a clean paper towel.
2. Entire tool housing must also be disinfected by use of an EPA registered spray or wipe disinfectant used according to the manufacturers label
3. Store in a clean place such as stand, hook or on a clean towel covered by a clean towel
4. Electrical items with a cord may not be stored in a “clean” container.

**Comment:** Placing the cord of an electrical item in a drawer or other closed container with “clean” items will contaminate all items in the drawer/container.

**E. Cleaning and disinfecting tables, chairs, shampoo bowls:**

- Using an EPA registered wipe or spray, all chairs, treatment tables and nails stations must be disinfected daily according to the manufacturers label.
- All treatment tables must be covered with a new, paper cover or clean linen cover prior to each service.
- Using an EPA registered wipe or spray, all shampoo bowls must be cleaned and disinfected daily – including the front of bowl and all handles.

**F. Hand washing:**

- Licensees and students must wash their hands prior to any service and after eating, smoking or using the restroom.
- Liquid soap and disposable towels must be provided for both licensee’s and customers.
- When hand washing is not possible, the use of hand sanitizer with a 70% alcohol concentration is acceptable (except after using the restroom, when hands must be washed).
- Hand sanitizer must be available on all nail stations for customers to use prior to service.

**Comment:** Do not require antibacterial soap – see FDA ruling above.

**G. Single-use items:**

- Any item that cannot be cleaned and disinfected is considered single use and must be disposed of after each use. This includes, but not limited to, nail files/emery boards made of any material except metal or glass, all cotton, buffing blocks, pumice stones, orange sticks, toe separators, wooden spatulas, neck strips, and paper coverings.
- Single use items may not be stored for customers on the premises and customers may not take single use items home and return with them for service.
- All single use items must be stored in a clean, covered container marked “clean” or in their original, single use packaging.

**4. LINENS**

- All linens (towels, sheets, robes, etc.) must be laundered prior to use. Laundry may be done through commercial laundry services or on-site.
- No towel, cloth, sheet or robe may be re-used between customers – this includes towels used for application of hair color remover and towels used as a hand rest for manicure clients.
- Used linens must be immediately placed in a closed container exclusively for storage of used linens.
- Linens shall be washed on hot with detergent and dried until “hot to the touch”
- Clean linens shall be stored in a closed container, cabinet or drawer that is exclusively used for the storage of clean linens
- Capes shall be washed or disinfected daily

**Comment:** Some states are writing rules to have a “fresh” cape for every service. There is no scientific evidence to support this and with the significant cost/time consideration it was decided not to include this in the document.

## **5. STORAGE**

### **A. Used items (“dirty”):**

- Implements or tools that have been used on a customer must be placed in a closed, covered container marked “dirty” until properly cleaned and disinfected.
- Container must be made of solid sides and be able to be disinfected.
- Container used for temporary storage of used items must disinfected daily
- Tools and implements must not be placed in or on clothes, aprons, pockets, bags, or holsters, or worn by the licensee, and must not come into contact with surfaces that have not been disinfected.

**Comment:** Pockets, holsters and aprons are generally constructed from porous materials such as cloth/leather which cannot be disinfected and would collect tissue and potential pathogens.

### **B. Disinfected items (“clean”):**

- Once properly cleaned and disinfected, all multi-use items must be stored in a clean, covered container marked “disinfected” or “ready to use”.
- Once properly cleaned and disinfected, all electrical implements must be stored in a clean place such as a hook, stand, or on a clean towel.

### **C. Linens:**

- All clean linens must be stored in a closed, covered container, drawer, or cabinet.
- All towels used in towel warmers must washed/dried at end of the day and stored overnight in a clean, covered, closed container (not the towel warmer).

## **6. MULTI-USE CONTAINERS**

In the removal of product from multi-use containers:

- All products removed from a multi-use container such as a tub or tube, must be done so in a manner that the remaining product in the container is not contaminated.
- Products such as pomades, waxes and gels may be removed with either a single use spatula that is disposed of immediately after a single use or a disinfected multi use spatula.
- Powders and lotions may be dispensed from a shaker or pump ensuring that the licensee’s or client’s hands never touch the dispensing portions of the container.

## **7. NAIL SERVICES**

### **A. Disinfection of pedicure bowls:**

All pedicure bowls must be cleaned and disinfected prior to each use in the following way:

1. Empty pedicure bowl.
2. Remove all removable parts (including but not limited to screens, foot plates, impellers and fans).
3. Clean removable parts with soap/detergent and water, rinse, immerse in EPA registered disinfectant following manufacturer's directions for proper contact time.
4. Scrub tub with soap/detergent and rinse with clean water.
5. Replace removable cleaned and disinfected parts.
6. Fill tub and add EPA registered disinfectant to achieve proper concentration.
7. Allow to sit, or run through system (jetted tubs) for manufacturers recommended contact time.
8. Drain tub and air dry or wipe dry with clean paper towel.

**Comment:** These instructions for pedicure bowl are best practice and it is understood that they seem impractical in most salons. However, it was agreed that the best practice to protect the consumer was what must be written, knowing that some states may elect to modify them. If the proper procedure is done after EVERY client, there is no need for additional daily or monthly procedures.

### **B. Single-use items:**

- Any item that cannot be properly cleaned and disinfected is considered single-use and must be disposed of after a single use. This includes, but is not limited to, all nail files/emery boards that are not made entirely of metal or glass, pumice stones, buffing blocks, orangewood sticks, cotton, toe separators, flip-flops.

### **C. Storage of implements and single-use items:**

- Storage of implements or single use items for a client is prohibited.
- Allowing clients to keep their own implements/single use items and bring them to appointments is prohibited.
- Single use items may be given to client for use at home, but may not be brought back for use in salon.

**Comment:** Items kept in a closed box or bag may provide breeding ground for molds and bacteria. When client takes items home, they are often left in hot cars increasing the likelihood of bacterial growth.

## **8. MAKE-UP SERVICES**

- All makeup that comes in a cake, loose or liquid form, must be transferred to a palette with a disinfected spatula (or single-use) for use with a single customer. Any excess make-up must be disposed of immediately following the service.
- Eyeliner that does not require a sharpener must have a portion transferred to a palette for single use with a disinfected (or single-use) spatula.
- Make-up pencils that require a sharpener must be sharpened prior to each use.
- Pencil sharpeners must be cleaned out and properly disinfected by immersion or spray with an EPA registered disinfectant after each use.
- Disposable applicators must be used in the application of mascara.
- Liquid foundation must be dispensed with a pump style bottle or removed from container without allowing mouth of container to be contaminated.
- Make-up displays should not be accessible to the public and all make-up should be covered when not in use.
- When make-up displays are accessible to the public, disposable applicators for all make-up must be readily available.

## **9. WAXING SERVICES**

### **A. Waxing Services**

- Roll on wax is prohibited.
- Wax pots must remain covered and free from debris.
- Wax may be removed for use by one of the following methods:
  - Single-use spatula disposed of after a single dip/application.
  - Disinfected plastic spatulas – new spatula for each dip into pot.
  - Removal of wax needed for entire service into single use, disposable cup. ONLY in this circumstance may the same applicator be used for the entire service. Cup (including all remaining wax) and applicators must be disposed of immediately after use. Remaining wax may not be put back into pot.
- If wax becomes contaminated or has visible debris, pot must be emptied and disinfected. No wax may be re-used; only new wax may be used in the pot.
- Area to be waxed must be cleaned with antiseptic wipe prior to service to reduce the risk of infection.
- Gloves must be worn when performing waxing services.
- Waxing of nasal hair is prohibited.
- Paraffin wax must be portioned out for each client in a bag or other container, or dispensed in a manner that prevents contamination of the unused supply. All portions used on a client must be disposed of immediately following use.

**Comment:** Nasal hair waxing creates a significant health risk for consumers. CDC estimates 30% of Americans are colonized with MRSA in nares. The waxing of nares creates portal of entry with good blood supply for infections like MRSA to take hold. There is no adequate way to “clean” skin inside of nares for this

type of service to be safe.

**B. Cleaning and disinfecting of wax pot:**

- Wax pot must be completely cleaned/disinfected when wax is contaminated or debris is visible. In this case:
  - a) All wax must be emptied and disposed of immediately.
  - b) Pot must be washed with soap/detergent and rinsed.
  - c) Spray or wipe all surfaces with EPA registered disinfectant and follow manufacturers guidelines for contact time.
  - d) Allow to air dry, or wipe dry with a clean paper towel.
  - e) Add new wax to pot.

**10. BLOOD EXPOSURE PROCEDURE**

**A. For client injury, a licensee must:**

1. Stop the service.
2. Put gloves on hands.
3. If appropriate, assist client to sink and rinse injured area under running water.
4. Pat injured area dry using a new, clean paper towel.
5. Offer antiseptic and adhesive bandage.
6. Place all single-use items in a bag and place in trash container.
7. Remove all implements from work station, then properly clean and disinfect implements.
8. Clean and disinfect work station.
9. Remove gloves from hands and dispose.
10. Wash hands.
11. Return to service.

**B. For a licensee injury, that licensee must:**

1. Stop the service.
2. Explain situation to client and excuse him- or herself.
3. If appropriate, rinse injured area under running water.
4. Pat injured area dry using a new, clean paper towel.
5. Apply antiseptic and adhesive bandage.
6. Put gloves on hands.
7. Please all single-use items in a bag and place in a trash container.
8. Remove implements from work station, then properly clean and disinfect implements.
9. Clean and disinfect station.
10. Remove gloves.
11. Wash hands.
12. Return to service.

**11. PROHIBITIONS**

The following are prohibited from salons:

- Methylmalonic acid (MMA)
- Blades for cutting of skin (credo, rasp)
- UV light boxes
- Roll on wax
- Waxing of nasal hair
- Any product banned by the FDA
- Providing a service outside of the scope of license
- Live fish, leeches, snails, and other living creatures for use in any cosmetic service

## **12. TOWEL WARMERS**

Salons using hot steamed towels in services must meet these requirements:

- Towel warmers must be disinfected daily with a disinfectant wipe or spray.
- Towels used in a warmer must be washed with detergent and bleach and dried using a hot dryer setting;
- Practitioners preparing towels for the warmers must first wash their hands or wear gloves; and
- Wet towels used in services must be prepared fresh each day. At the end of the day, unused steamed towels must be removed and laundered.
- Towel warmer must be left open overnight to allow unit to dry completely

## **13. CONTINUING EDUCATION**

- Prior to renewal, all licensees will complete 2 hours of continuing education on health and safety updates. This may include, but is not limited to infection control, chemical safety, chemical disposal, current pathogens of concern
- Continuing education providers must update material annually to provide current, topical material that is relevant to the licensee.