

Hairdressers, Manicurists and Aestheticians Consumer Fact Sheet

Board of Registration of Cosmetology and Barbering

Cosmetologists, manicurists, aestheticians and the salons where they work must be licensed by the state Board of Registration of Cosmetology and Barbering. Licensing assures that the salon has met the Board's sanitary requirements and that the hairdresser, manicurist or aesthetician has met certain minimum requirements for competent practice.

Cosmetology

Cosmetology is the practice of arranging, dressing, curling, waving, cleansing, cutting, singeing, bleaching, coloring, or otherwise treating the hair of any person for compensation.

A person licensed as an "operator" has successfully completed a course of 1000 hours of professional training in a Board approved cosmetology school and passed both a practical and written examination. An operator must work under the supervision of a licensed "cosmetologist."

A licensed cosmetologist is an operator who has had at least two years experience and has passed the Board's examination for licensing at this level. A cosmetologist works without supervision and may supervise operators, manicurists and aestheticians.

Manicuring

Manicuring is the practice of cutting, trimming, polishing, tinting, coloring or cleansing the nails and the applying artificial nail products for any person for compensation.

A licensed manicurist has completed at least 100 hours of professional training in manicuring at a Board approved school and has successfully passed the licensing examination. A manicurist may be employed in a cosmetology salon, manicuring salon or an aesthetics salon.

Aesthetics

Aesthetics means the practice for compensation of cleansing, stimulating, manipulating and beautifying skin with hands or mechanical or electrical appliances, or by the use of cosmetic preparations, tonics lotions, or creams.

An aesthetician has completed at least 300 hours of professional training in a Board approved aesthetics school and has successfully passed a practical and written examination.

Tips for Consumers

There are a few things you should look for in a salon before getting a haircut or color, a manicure, or a facial. To help insure that you receive safe and satisfactory service, check these basic points:

- ASK to see the salon license and the license of the person providing the service. (For security reasons, personal licenses are not required to be posted at individual stations.)
- Observe the overall condition of the salon. It should appear clean and neat. Towels should be stored in closed cabinets, hair should be swept from the floor, and perm rods, combs and brushes should be properly sanitized.
- The cosmetologist, manicurist or aesthetician is required to wash his/her hands before starting each new client.
- If you will be getting a manicure, observe the time spent on the manicuring service. If the manicurist is rushed, it can result in improper sanitizing of work area and tools, as well as nicks and cuts to the client. Keep in mind, however, that many CLIENTS want to "get out quick" and may have a tendency to rush the manicurist.
- Observe the condition of the manicuring table. The manicuring table **MUST** be properly sanitized between each client.
- A sterilizer (a container filled with a disinfectant solution for sterilizing manicuring tools) should be visible **ON THE TABLE**.
- The manicuring tools **MUST** be properly sanitized between each client.

Manicuring requires the use of chemicals (such as acetone) and salons must be properly ventilated. If you are conscious of a strong chemical odor, proper ventilation may not be in place.

Advertising and Pricing


- The **price list** for all services must be posted in a conspicuous place in the salon.
- **Gender based pricing** for cosmetology services is prohibited by the Massachusetts Public Accommodations Act (MGL c. 272, ss 92A and 98). Prices must be based on factors such as hair length or difficulty of styling.
- Check for "**a la carte**" **pricing**. Many manicuring services are offered "a la carte" (i.e., application of nail strengthener or moisturizer may be an additional charge over the price of the basic manicure). Tell the manicurist what you want and ask what it will cost before having the manicure completed.
- No salon may use any **advertising** which is misleading or inaccurate or misrepresent any materials or services, terms, values or policies. (For example, if a "permanent wave" is advertised at a specific price, the advertised price must include the cost of all

operations necessary to complete the service. If the price of a hair cut and styling is separate, it must be stated in the advertisement.)

Filing a Complaint

While the majority of licensees conduct themselves as true professionals, the Division of Professional Licensure will take action against those who fail to maintain acceptable standards of competence and integrity.

In many cases, complaints are made by dissatisfied consumers - but, dissatisfaction alone is not proof of incompetence or sufficient grounds for disciplinary action.

If you have a serious complaint against a licensed hairdresser, manicurist, aesthetician, or licensed salon, call or write the Division's Office of Investigations and ask for a complaint form. Or download a copy of the [complaint form](#) .

Division of Professional Licensure
Office of Investigations
1000 Washington Street, Suite 710
Boston, Mass. 02118
(617) 727-7406