

**HAIR SALONS:
A LICENSED
INDUSTRY
PREPARED TO
STAY OPEN**

A White Paper

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Introduction

The beauty industry generates over \$57 billion in annual sales. There are more than 2.3 million workers in the professional beauty industry. Beauty professionals provide services to almost every American during economic upturns, as well as downturns.

Like many industries, the COVID-19 outbreak has had a devastating impact on the beauty industry. The impact was significant given the length of time salons were closed, along with capacity limitations when salons were allowed to reopen. Closing and reopening salons required an incredible amount of time, planning and investment. Salon owners invested in PPE, signage, repositioning service areas, establishing barriers, eliminating or reconfiguring lobby areas, additional training and technology, enhanced disinfecting and additional customer communications. Salon owners and licensed beauty professionals comply with all state mandates. Customers anxiously awaited salons to reopen.

Initially, demand was strong following reopening. The pressure on salons the first few weeks was incredibly high and salons were disciplined in all health and sanitation practices. Salons are now faced with slower demand and have the opportunity to rebuild their businesses. The impact of another mandated closure would cause significant damage and force stylists out of work again, with very limited benefits. Let's keep stylists working. Let's keep salons open.

Hair salons are located throughout rural and urban areas, small towns and major cities, north to south, from coast to coast. Nearly all Americans value a visit to their hair salon as part of their normal routine. This routine is often based on familiarity and a willingness of customers to actively comply with any requirements. There is mutual respect and a mutual commitment to the health and well-being of one another; the stylist and the customer. This one-to-one interaction can be well managed to eliminate the transmission of COVID-19. As customers return to salons, they have confidence in their trained, licensed beauty professionals.

Salons are well positioned to remain open and fully comply with additional requirements. Salons are one of a few retail businesses that are licensed, inspected and already comply with aggressive safety and sanitation processes. Salons are continuously inspected by the state boards of cosmetology. This paper provides more information about the cosmetology industry, as well as how the salon industry has the ability to remain open AND protect the well-being of beauty professionals and customers.

The Current State of Beauty

Economic contributions of the professional beauty industry are far-reaching and significant.

- The beauty industry generates over \$57 billion in annual sales.
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- There are more than 1.2 million salon industry establishments. The majority of salons are considered locally owned, small businesses.
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- 47% of the salon industry workforce are minorities.
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- 60% of salon businesses are owned by women.
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- There are more than 2.3 million workers in the professional beauty industry, generating more than \$57 billion in sales, paying over \$37.7 billion in wages and contributing over \$3.7 billion in income taxes to federal and local governments.
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- There are tens of millions of employment opportunities for women and minority entrepreneurs in the cosmetology industry.
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- For an industry that is already leading the U.S. in job growth, the Bureau of Labor Statistics projects a growth of 10% jump in career opportunities for barbers, hair stylists, and cosmetologists over the next 10 years. Well above the national average.

The Value of a Licensed Industry

The impact of COVID-19 has been far reaching. Many businesses have reopened and want to stay open. The salon industry is well equipped to make any adjustments necessary to remain open. Being licensed and having licensed professionals as employees provide the salons additional strength while operating in this new environment.

Cosmetology State Boards and Accountability

Cosmetology state boards are set up by governors to make sure customers and professionals are protected. Governors appoint state board members. Cosmetology boards have worked closely with State health departments to implement additional operating standards for the salon industry. The state boards continue to monitor and inspect salons during this pandemic. The regulation of the professional beauty industry provides consumer protection and consumer safety.

The Value of Licensed Salons

Salons are different than many other businesses because salons are licensed. A primary focus of salon licensing is on the safety and sanitation of the salon in order to protect the health of employees and customers. State licensing boards provide a system of accountability for standards of health and safety in salons. State board representatives inspect salons on a scheduled and random basis to audit sanitation and safety practices. State Boards also investigate any complaints related to beauty establishments.

The Value of Licensed Professionals

In addition to the salons being licensed, the professionals working in the salons are licensed. Licensed professionals are already well-trained and accountable for safety, sanitation and infection control. Salons only employ licensed, well trained professionals. In order to become licensed, professionals must complete hundreds of hours of training and pass state licensing exams. Cosmetology schools provide essential skills for safety, sanitation and infection control to all students. Every state has rules and regulations for safety and sanitation.

Following are highlights of the cosmetology license:

- State licensing ensures professionals have skills needed to help prevent disease transmissions for both the customers and employees.
- All curriculum has more than 100 hours of training that includes: cleanliness and sanitation of tools and workspaces, safe use and handling of tools, safe use and handling of chemicals, consumer protection, proper storage and use of disinfectants, scientific concepts (biology and chemistry related to services provided).
- The public values the beauty license and understands its focus on safety and sanitation.
- State board regulations typically require visible placement of both the salon license and the individual licenses.
- Licensed beauty professionals are very familiar and trained to use EPA-registered hospital grade disinfectant and products.

Safely Providing Services to Customers

Nearly all salons have reopened across the United States. COVID-19 has dramatically increased the public's awareness of the importance of safety and sanitation; the cosmetology industry has focused on safety and sanitation for decades. Hair salons can thrive in a COVID world.

The salon industry is well positioned to remain open and make any necessary adjustments, as the number one focus is the health and safety of stylists and customers. Stylists are well trained in safety and sanitation, often exceeding the licensing requirements.

Salons have been opened in most states for more than seven weeks. By aggressively implementing all requirements and building upon decades of experience, it appears that the salon industry has not been identified as a source of transmission. Even in cases where employees may have tested positive for COVID-19, no transmission to customers has been documented. The cooperation between Health Departments and salons has been strong and the Health Departments have been complimentary about the safe operations of salons.

It is a fact that all hair salons and all licensed hair professionals have been extensively trained and have deep experience in delivering safety and sanitation as an important aspect of their jobs for decades. It is not new in a COVID-19 world for salon professionals to have an intense focus and understanding of their personal health and safety, and that of their customers.

It appears almost all of the transmission risks can be mitigated in the well-managed, salon environment. The customer usually only interacts with one person, their stylist. With the stylist and customer wearing masks, any transmission risk is significantly reduced. Stylist-customer pairs are positioned six feet apart to reduce contact with additional people. The incredible focus on disinfecting also reduces the risk. Salons are often spacious with strong ventilation given the services they provide. This is also helpful to reduce transmission.

Sanitation and COVID-19 Actions

Salons have quickly adjusted to the COVID-19 world and can continue to provide a safe environment. Following are many examples of the steps that have been taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Customer Communication

- Customers have adjusted to appointments, queuing systems and apps that control their time in the salon
- Salons have communicated new expectations effectively to customers
- Given the one-to-one interaction, stylists can leverage their connection to the customer to gain compliance
- Salons have effectively denied services to customers who are unwilling to comply with requirements
- Salons have aggressively implemented signage and communications to assure that customers who may be ill or have been exposed do not receive services
- Salons have invested in signage to quickly and visibly communicate expectations
- Customers have been responsive to answering health questions
- Salons track customer data including name and phone number of customer, time of service, other customers in the salon at the same time and services provided

Salon Employee Communication

- Employees have received additional and ongoing training to assure they can safely provide services
- Employees are supportive of health checks and health screenings
- Employees are aware of necessary communication regarding any exposure or symptoms
- Employees are immediately quarantined based on exposure, symptoms or testing
- Employees are provided continuous information on the benefits available to them if it is required that they are quarantined
- Employees are accepting of break rooms and other common areas being restricted

Salon Environment

- Salons limit and manage customers in the salon
- Salons place visible signage to communicate requirements outside and inside the salon
- Salons continually disinfect and clean tools, styling chairs and stations with the correct disinfectant and processes
- Hand sanitizer is visible and accessible to customers and stylists
- Stylists immediately hand wash and disinfect after every customer
- Clean capes or disposable capes provide added protection
- Plexiglass barriers are installed, as necessary
- Stylists wear a face covering and gloves, when appropriate
- Customers wear face coverings, when appropriate
- Salons have eliminated food, beverage and all non-essential items in lobby area (magazines, toys)
- Product displays have been limited, so they can be conveniently and consistently sanitized
- Salons frequently clean and disinfect the restroom(s)
- Salons continually clean doors handles, lobby chairs, front desk, iPads and terminals

Conclusion



The professional beauty industry is a critical element in America's economic landscape. There are more than 2.3 million workers who earn \$37.7 billion in wages and contribute \$103.9 billion in goods and services to the U.S. economy. The beauty industry is dominated by small businesses and self-employed individuals.

Many businesses have successfully reopened and customers value their ability to receive services. Salons should be able to remain open, given the fact that their number one focus has always been on the health and well being of stylists and customers. Having licensed professionals in the salon, providing every service, provides an advantage over other businesses.

Some businesses may have one person who received training or obtained a license, but ALL stylists are licensed and well-trained. Stylists have to maintain their license and remain current on all licensing requirements.

The historical and consistent regulation of the professional hair salon industry provides broad consumer protection and safety. This has become even more important and more visible in the COVID-19 world.

Hair salons are located throughout rural and urban areas, small towns and major cities, north to south and coast to coast. Nearly all Americans value a visit to a hair salon as part of their normal routine, and they feel safe in their salon. Customers want to be safe and want to do the right thing to protect everyone from COVID-19. They value the license and professionalism of their stylist and have confidence in the disinfecting and broad processes. They know they will be served by trained, experienced, licensed professionals.

Licensed salons and licensed professionals are well positioned to leverage their strength to continue to operate. They are committed to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and can assimilate and adapt to any new practices that may be required or recommended.

References

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