

# Taking care of your chemical health and safety in nail bars and salons

## Information Sheet



Feb 2018

Using nail products and other products several times every day can pose a risk to your health. This information leaflet has been developed to provide practical advice to those working in the nail industry.

### What type of hazardous ingredients are contained in some nail products and potential health effects?

Nail products including acrylic nail liquids can cause dermatitis and allergic reactions. These can contain ethyl methacrylate (EMA) which is less hazardous than using methyl methacrylate (MMA). Products containing MMA are not recommended for nail services. Methacrylic acid primer and non-methacrylic acid primers used to prepare the nail surface for artificial nail extensions may cause skin sensitisation and chemical burns to skin or eyes. Exposure to liquid & powder acrylic nail systems and UV nail products can cause dermatitis. Acrylic fumes can cause headaches, dizziness, nausea and irritation. The filing of artificial nails can cause asthma.

Nail services create dust that can cause wheezing and chest tightness.

Formaldehyde can be found in nail strengtheners. Exposure to formaldehyde may cause cancer and is suspected of causing genetic defects. Ingredients used as preservatives in the nail products have the potential of releasing formaldehyde.

Toluene found in some nail polishes is suspected of damaging fertility. Dibutyl phthalate (DBP) used to stop nail polish cracking is banned in Europe. It is dangerous for pregnant women.



*Dermatitis on the hand*

You should also be aware that infections or diseases can be acquired from some clients. For example viral hepatitis is caused by Hepatitis A, B or C. AIDS or fungal infections such as Athlete's Foot can be contracted from clients. Hepatitis B is very infectious and has a significant death rate and can cause cancer of the liver. Hepatitis C can cause acute hepatitis and may lead to chronic liver disease and death. Good hygiene procedures must be followed to avoid contact with blood or bodily fluids containing hepatitis.

### Top tips on how you can protect yourself and your employees from harm?

- Prepare a safety statement and chemical risk assessment.
- Make a list (inventory) of all nail products and other products such as acetone, sterilising fluid and for cleaning products. Get information from your supplier of these products.
- Observe any warning labels for safe use on the product container, packaging or leaflet. Consult your supplier for further information from the manufacturer which may include safety data sheets.
- Discuss the use of less toxic products or products in a less hazardous form for the workers. '3 free products' should not contain formaldehyde, dibutyl phthalate and toluene. Products which are '5 free' should not contain the above or camphor or formaldehyde resin.
- Know the safe way to handle the products and what precautions to take before using any products. Always follow the manufacturers' instructions for use. Make sure everyone in the workplace gets this information.
- When using UV or LED light sources to cure nails always follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Remember some products including acetone are flammable - avoid tea lights and candles.
- Keep the products off your hands - wear gloves and clean up spills straight away.
- Always put the cap back on containers straight away after use.
- Store products in a dry, cool, dark place in small quantities as much as possible.
- Use lined metal bins with tight fitting lids to dispose of gauze etc. soaked with nail products.
- Always wear the personal protective equipment as advised by the manufacturer - this may include gloves and eye protection. Never wear surgical masks as they are not respiratory personal protective equipment and will not protect you against solvents, dusts or fumes from nail products.
- Avoid latex gloves if possible due to the risk of an allergic reaction. If you must use them use low protein, powdered free gloves.
- Use disposable gloves and dispose after each use.
- Practice good hygiene, wear gloves and wash your hands frequently. Always wash your hands after each client.
- Check your skin every day for dryness and soreness. If there is a problem report it at work and get medical advice.
- If you have health problems which seem to be related to your work including skin, eye, breathing, coughing or wheezing problems consult an occupational health professional.
- Keep food and drinks away from chemicals.

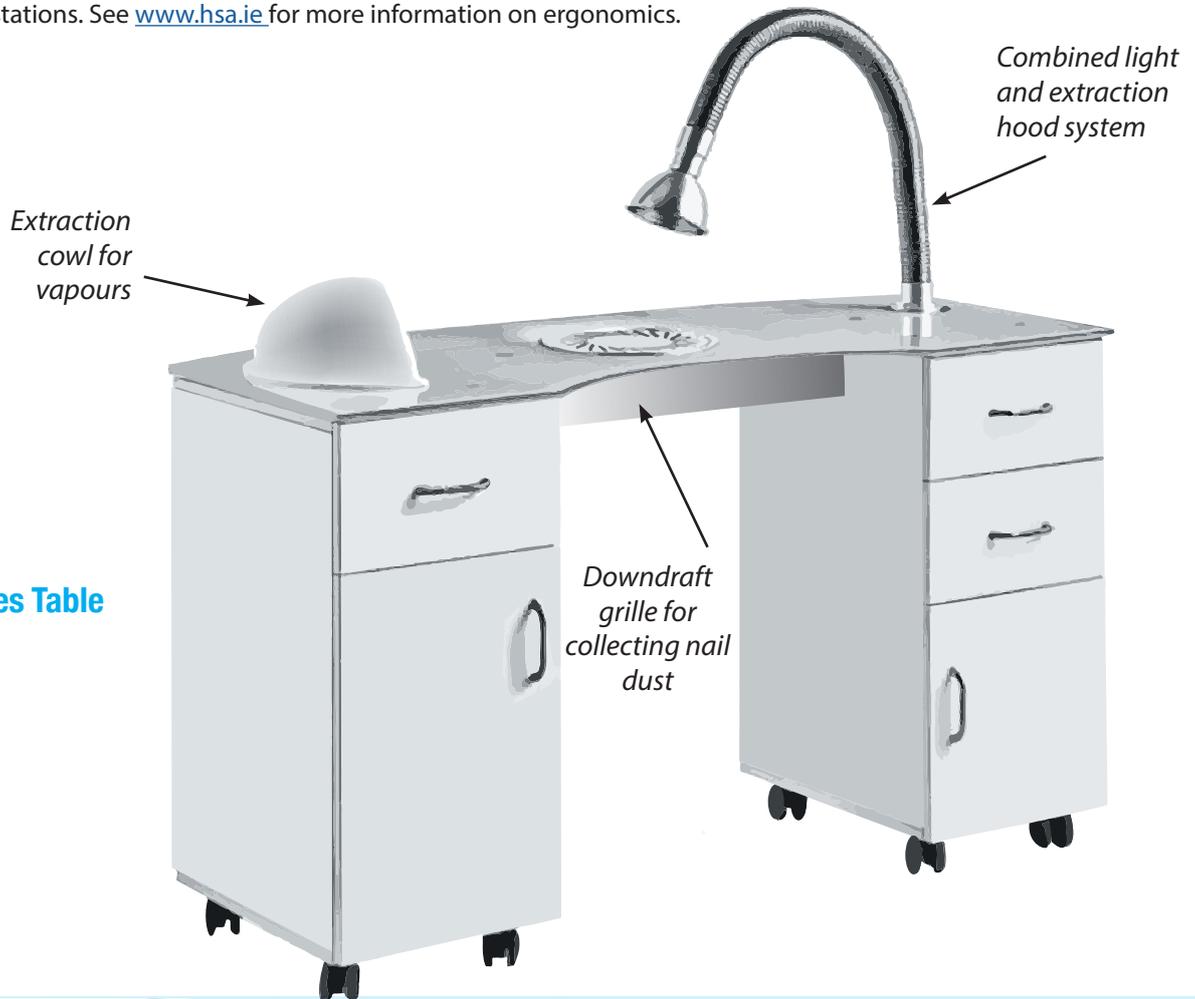


*Surgical masks do not give adequate protection from nail products*

- When ventilation in a salon is not sufficient, the airborne chemicals and dusts can accumulate in the air and they can be inhaled in significant quantities. Ensure that there is as much natural ventilation as possible and make sure windows and doors are opened.
- To control chemical vapour or odour, provide an extraction hood or downdraft table at the nail workstation. This is to allow the capture of dusts, vapours and solvents at source to stop workers inhaling them. Always make sure that the clients' nails are over the downdraft.
- Ensure that the manufacturer's instructions are followed for maintenance of filters on the ventilation tables or extraction system to ensure they work properly. The air captured can be filtered for return to the salon or it can be discharged to outside.

## Other significant hazards

Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI). Many employees experience problems caused by having to maintain awkward postures during their nail services. This area should be risk assessed to put controls in place to protect them. The controls would include varying tasks to allow muscles to recover, height adjustable chairs, taking breaks and good ergonomically designed workstations. See [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie) for more information on ergonomics.



**Nail Services Table**



## Where can I get more information?

Complete your safety statement and online risk assessments through [www.BESMART.ie](http://www.BESMART.ie)

- Use our BeSmart Top Tips information sheets on Chemical Safety [https://besmart.ie/fs/doc/Chemicals\\_Fact\\_Sheet.pdf](https://besmart.ie/fs/doc/Chemicals_Fact_Sheet.pdf)
- Check out our chemicals webpages at [http://www.hsa.ie/eng/Your\\_Industry/Chemicals/](http://www.hsa.ie/eng/Your_Industry/Chemicals/)
- Contact us at [chemicals@hsa.ie](mailto:chemicals@hsa.ie) if you have any queries.

## Further Information and Guidance:

Visit our website at [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie), telephone our contact centre on **1890 289 389** or email [wcu@hsa.ie](mailto:wcu@hsa.ie)

Use BeSMART, our free online risk assessment tool at [www.besmart.ie](http://www.besmart.ie)

Check out our range of free online courses at [www.hsalearning.ie](http://www.hsalearning.ie)