

# Nail Salons And Workplace Illness: Protect Yourself



Every day, manicurists, pedicurists and other salon professionals are exposed to a variety of dangerous – yet often overlooked – workplace hazards. Some of these hazards pose an immediate risk, while other can cause long-term damage that builds up over time. Being exposed to chemicals and toxic fumes, coming into contact with biological hazards (such as diseases carried by clients), and straining for hours in uncomfortable physical positions can lead to a wide array of illnesses and injury, including:

- Respiratory damage (including asthma)
  - Chemical burns
  - Watery/red eyes
  - Joint pain and damage
  - Muscle damage
  - Repetitive motion injuries (such as carpal tunnel syndrome)
  - Cancer
  - Reproductive issues
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# Nail Technicians: By The Numbers

For many manicurists and other salon professionals, protecting their health is about more than just preventing sickness – it is about being able to provide for their families. Nearly two-thirds of all nail technicians are married and have children, and on average their earnings accounts for 46 percent of their families' income. This means that that a nail technician staying healthy and working is often vital to his or her family's financial wellbeing.

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## Did You Know?

*Pennsylvania ranks sixth in the nation for number of nail technicians (11,884) and number of nail salons (2,092).*

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Despite how important it is for manicurists to remain healthy, a recent [industry survey](#) found that 52 percent of manicurists and pedicurists have work-related health concerns. Even more surprising is the fact that most of these workers did not use protective wear on a regular basis. The following protective wear is **worn less than half the time (or never)** by the corresponding percentage of nail technicians:

- Wrist brace: 90%
- Finger wraps: 85%
- Protective masks: 71%
- Protective eyewear: 63%
- Gloves: 54%
- Splash proof apron: 49%

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# How You Can Stay Safe

So what should nail technicians do to protect their health? What behavior should salon owners encourage? In addition to changing their habits and beginning to wear protective gear more regularly, those who work with nails should follow the five tips shown in the image below – created by the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) and originally published on this [helpful blog](#) by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL).



OSHA has also assembled a guide for nail salon workers called "[Stay Healthy and Safe While Giving Manicures and Pedicures](#)," which provides useful tips and additional information for manicurists and pedicurists, other beauty industry professionals, and salon owners.