

## **COSHH – The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health**

Whenever we have a visit from a Health and Safety inspector he or she almost certainly asks us about COSHH.

COSHH is the short name for the regulations called 'Control of Substances Hazardous to Health'. Salons have to comply with COSHH because they use chemicals such as colour and perm in the salon, which could be potentially harmful to employees or Clients if used incorrectly. The COSHH regulations require all salons to do a COSHH assessment on everything that we use in the salon that contains chemicals. A COSHH assessment is actually the same as a risk assessment except that it relates only to the products we use.

With a COSHH assessment, salons have to identify any hazards associated with the products – things like whether they could irritate the skin, or cause an allergic reaction – and then work out how we can reduce the risk of this happening. This might include simple things like making sure there are always clean dry towels available so that people can properly dry their hands, through to providing gloves and making sure that the team have a well ventilated area where they can mix up colour.

The suppliers of hairdressing products must provide us with Health & Safety information on their products. Most suppliers in the UK do this in the form of a booklet titled '**A Guide to the Health & Safety of Salon Hair Products**' which should be supplied together with a list of hairdressing products which tells you which part of the booklet to refer to for each product.

If you do not have information from your supplier, you should contact them and request it.

Additional copies of the booklet can be obtained from The Hairdressing Beauty Suppliers Association, Manfield House, Southampton Street, Covent Garden, London, WC2E 0LR. Telephone 0170 764 9499 or visit [www.hbsa.uk.com](http://www.hbsa.uk.com).

**Please be sure to check your legal responsibilities very carefully before proceeding.**