Fact Sheet

Eco-Efficiency in Hair and Beauty Salons

Introduction

Today’s beauty salons can offer a range of services – from hair styling to nail and skin treatments, such as tanning, facials, body wraps, manicures, and make-up applications, as well as retailing many products. In providing these services, however, many wastes can be generated. The most notable environmental issues for salons are:

- The use of chemical products (dyes, bleaches, solvents)
- Air pollution (odours)
- Water use and wastewater disposal
- Energy use
- Solid Waste (Paper towels, product containers, other packaging)

Nova Scotia has hundreds of small hair and beauty salons/shops, many located in private homes. And, while individual businesses may not discharge substantial amounts of wastes, the main problem is the combined impact of chemical and waste discharges from many small businesses. This fact sheet has been developed to assist companies in this sector make eco-efficiency part of their day-to-day decision making. By implementing some basic environmental practices, salons can increase their facilities’ environmental responsibility, and often lower many costs.

“Prevention is far more powerful, more painless, less costly, and consequently, more sensible than forever coping with and suffering from an unrelenting and debilitating stream of problems.”
- Joe Simonetta, Founder and Executive Director, Pro-Earth

Chemicals in Beauty Salons

There are a wide range of chemicals used in the hair and beauty industry. Many of these chemicals are hazardous to the environment, but are also of concern to human health.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chemicals in Beauty Salons</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>hair dyes</td>
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<td>bleaches</td>
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<td>peroxides</td>
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<td>chemical peels</td>
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<td>hair styling agents</td>
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<td>nail/skin care products</td>
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<td>disinfectants and cleaning products</td>
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</tbody>
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When working with chemical products, all staff in the business must be sure to take appropriate precautions.

- Switch to less toxic products. Switch to enzyme-based alternatives from traditional chemicals. Choose henna or other vegetable dyes. Avoid shampoos with fragrance or artificial colours. Try semi or demi-permanent, non-ammoniated colours rather than permanent ones, and avoid shampoos that have formaldehyde preservatives. Avoid permanents containing triethanolamine (TEA), diethanolamine (DEA), and monoethanolamine (MEA). Try ammonium thioglycolate (ATG) rather than glycerol monothioglycolate (GMTG). Avoid hair care products containing selenium, a heavy metal that can accumulate in the environment. Avoid persulfate boosters.
- Check Materials Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) to learn more about the products you are using, and what precautions may be necessary. This may include using protective equipment like gloves and chemically-resistant aprons where appropriate and working in well-ventilated spaces.
- Use as little of a chemical product as necessary. Mix only what you need, and use everything that you mix. Never mix products unless recommended by the manufacturers.
- Keep original containers, and ensure all containers are properly labelled. Store product according to package instructions.
- Use products with long shelf-life.
- Always seal products tightly when you are finished to prevent the escape of harmful odours, and to avoid spills.
- Apply materials by hand in small amounts rather than in bulk (for example, instead of soaking nails in a container, apply nail chemicals with a cotton ball.
- Pump dispensers should be used, wherever possible, in place of aerosols. If aerosols must be
used, look for those with a low VOC (Volatile Organic compound) content.
- Use funnels and drip trays to capture any liquid and to recover the product for reuse.
- Keep work areas tidy and clean.
- Clean up spills immediately. Use dry clean-up methods for spills and for routine clean-up. Don’t hose down work areas/floors and create larger amounts of contaminated wash water.
- Post signs to remind staff not to rinse or pour chemical products down the sink. Provide chemical management/spill prevention training for staff. Any employees using chemicals must be trained to use the products appropriately. This is the law in Nova Scotia.

Did you know?
One study has shown that up to 20% of hair dressers leave the business because of allergies or dermatitis. (TURI, University of Massachusetts)

Cleaning Products
Cleaning products can be among the most hazardous chemicals in any business. These products create hazardous waste - threatening human health and the natural environment. There are many “green products” available that are just as effective as traditional ones. Look for Eco-Logo or Green Seal certified products. Borax, ammonia and baking soda are examples of safe alternatives that can clean and disinfect to meet hospital standards and are much cheaper than name brand cleaners.

The following are points you should take into account when purchasing a cleaner for your business:
- Is it non-toxic to both humans and aquatic life?
- Is it biodegradable?
- Does it have a low corrosivity factor?
- Does it have acceptable Volatile Organic Carbon (VOC) levels?
- Is it sold in concentrated form?
- Can it work for multiple cleaning purposes?
- Is it effective when diluted with water at room temperature?

(From Green Seal’s “Chose Green Report” on General Purpose Cleaners - www.greenseal.org)

Reminder: Small businesses often purchase small quantities of chemical products “over-the-counter”. Buying “over-the-counter” can create an impression that these products are less hazardous to people and the environment. In fact, many of the components of these products are quite toxic and their use is often regulated in larger quantities. In Nova Scotia, these products require workplace labeling and employees must be trained to use products appropriately.

- Become aware of municipal, provincial and federal environmental legislation that applies to your business.

Solid Waste
Reducing solid waste from a salon is one of the easiest ways to “green” your business. Here are some straightforward ways to accomplish this:
- Replace paper towels with reusable cloth towels.
- Ask your suppliers to provide their products in refillable or recyclable containers.
- Provide clients with refillable containers, and offer a discounted refill service for gels, shampoos and conditioners.
- Ask your suppliers for alternative packaging that uses less packing material.
- Completely empty product bottles before discarding.
- Ask your suppliers to take back cardboard and plastic bottles for recycling.
- If appropriate, make packaging (e.g., Styrofoam peanuts and cardboard) available to other businesses or organizations (www.nsmaterials.com). It is important to make sure that used containers and boxes are clean, and that they do not contain chemicals.
- Where appropriate, wash and hang-dry plastic gloves and caps for reuse.

Additionally, recycling bins and compost collection containers should be installed in every business. This can facilitate recycling of paper and many plastics, as well as separation of organic materials like coffee grinds and food materials. Talk to your waste hauler or landlord to ensure that separated materials are reaching the appropriate destination, and not being recombined after hauling.

Landfill Bans
Nova Scotia has some of the strictest landfill bans in the country, and this allowed us to reach 50% diversion in 2000. Bans are in place for many items including: corrugated cardboard, newsprint, beverage, steel/tin and glass food containers, automotive batteries and antifreeze, used tires, waste paint, compostable organic material and several types of plastics, including shrink wrap. Speak to local waste haulers, recyclers and organizations like the Eco-Efficiency Centre about options available to your business.

Water/Energy Considerations
Water and energy is consumed in every hair and beauty salon. So it makes good business sense as well as good environmental sense, to reduce energy and water use wherever possible.
Water Conservation
The following are some easy water conservation practices:
• Use water only as necessary. Check for and repair any leaks in the piping. Remind employees to turn off faucets and report leaks.
• Install flow restrictors, aerators, toilet dams, urinal flushing controls, or other low-flow devices. Install automatic shutoffs on faucets and fountains.
• Use appropriate settings on equipment and appliances to maximize water efficiency.
• Use cold water instead of hot water wherever possible.

Hot water may be a big cost item in small shops. Consider steps to reduce heat loss, and therefore energy use related to your hot water. These include:
• Improving tank insulation.
• Using heat traps or insulating pipes where hot water flows.
• Using solar energy to heat water.

Hot water temperature should be kept to a minimum comfortable level to minimize the use of electricity, oil or propane required for heating.

Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning
• Control temperature settings whenever possible. Turn heat down or off during off hours. Limit access to thermostats. On older units, install timers or computer controls.
• Conduct routine maintenance on heating and ventilation equipment to ensure it is operating efficiently; replace old equipment with newer, more efficient equipment.
• Improve building envelope (ceilings, floors, walls, weather-stripping, caulking, doors seals, replace broken or cracked windows, storm windows, vestibules).
• Use daylight control measures, such as blinds or curtains, to reduce loads on HVAC systems.
• Ensure enough air is circulating to clear hazardous fumes from the air (six to ten fresh air changes per hour) but modify settings when air changes are not needed as frequently. This will reduce loads on HVAC systems.

Hand Drying
In bathrooms, high efficiency hand dryers or cloth towel rolls are a good alternative to paper towel use. These high efficiency hand dryers will dry hands faster than traditional units, while still using less electricity.

Resources and references
Guide for the Hairdressing, Nail & Beauty Industry, Queensland Department of Training & Industrial Relations

Cosmetology (TURI, University of Massachusetts)
http://www.turi.org/library

Waste Minimization Fact Sheet – Hair & Beauty Salons/Barber Shops, Alberta Environment -

Eco-Efficiency
What is Eco-Efficiency?
Eco-efficiency is a practical and systematic approach that businesses can adopt in setting and achieving environmental and business performance objectives. It is very closely associated with and complementary to other concepts such as Occupational, Health and Safety (OHS), Total Quality Management (TQM), and Pollution Prevention (also known as source reduction). It involves changing processes, finding alternatives, and reducing or eliminating the generation of toxic wastes instead of dealing with problems of cleanup or disposal after the fact. It also includes extending product liability, enhancing material recyclability and maximizing the use of renewable resources. Eco-efficiency means doing more with less, creating and providing quality products and services while reducing resource use, waste and pollution along the entire value chain. It is not only about managing waste after it is created, but strives towards preventing and minimizing waste in the first place.

The ultimate goal of eco-efficiency is to establish sustainable businesses while keeping environmental solutions in mind. Simultaneously, businesses increase efficiency while maintaining an environmental integrity.

Did you know?
If a faucet drips once every second, 10,000 litres of water are wasted in one year!!

Laundry
Doing laundry can use a surprising amount of energy and water resources. By using newer, high efficiency machines, water use can be reduced by up to 50% and electrical use by as much as 40%. Washing machines that tumble clothes, much like a traditional dryer does, are the most efficient. Be sure to look for Energy Star or EnerGuide symbols when considering any new appliance.

Dalhousie University’s Eco-Efficiency Centre is a non-profit environmental management centre supporting small- and medium-sized enterprises in Nova Scotia. Since 1998, the Centre has worked with several hundred businesses throughout Atlantic Canada, identifying opportunities to enhance productivity and optimize both environmental performance and operational efficiency.

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