



# Proposed repeal of the Hairdressing Establishment Regulations 1972

January 2016

**Disclaimer.** The views expressed in this discussion paper may not, in any circumstance, be interpreted as stating an official position of the Department of Health. This document is intended to serve as the basis for further discussion with interested stakeholders on the future management of public health concerns related to the hairdressing and barber industry.

## Aim

The Department of Health of WA would like to engage stakeholders on the proposal to repeal the *Hairdressing Establishment Regulations 1972* which would be replaced with the proposed “Public health guideline for the hairdressing and barber industry”.

## Introduction

The WA Hairdressing Establishment Regulations (the Regulations) were proclaimed in 1972, some 44 years ago, with few amendments since this time. The Regulations provided the necessary tool to improve hygiene and infection control standards across the industry.

Public health standards have now improved considerably since the 1970's. The hairdressing industry is highly competitive with strong incentives for businesses to meet public expectations for ensuring quality hygiene practices are adhered to.

Public health risks are also considered to be relatively low risk in the hairdressing industry, and can be easily managed with basic hygiene practices.

It is proposed that the *Hairdressing Establishment Regulations 1972* are repealed and replaced with the proposed “DRAFT Public health guideline for the hairdressing and barber industry”.

## The public health risk

Procedures performed by hairdressing operators (e.g. hair cutting) present minimal risk to public health. The transmission of blood borne viruses and infections is considered to be low risk for standard hair cutting procedures, and the transmission of head lice can be managed by following basic procedures.

Haircutting does not involve penetrating the client's skin, unlike a tattoo or body piercing.

Basic hygiene precautions are required such as:

- washing hands
- keeping the premise clean and tidy and
- washing instruments between use

to help to minimise the spread of infections.

Accidentally nicking or cutting a client with scissors or clippers may pose a risk of infection, although minimal and can be easily managed by appropriately cleaning and disinfecting equipment after use.

Issues related to the use of single use cut throat razors, or beauty therapy procedures will continue to be addressed by the *Health (Skin Penetration Procedures) Regulations 1998*, under the definition of skin penetration procedure.

## The issue

In recent years, a number of concerns have been raised about the Regulations. These have been outlined in the table below.

Concern	Issue
Dated definition of disinfecting solution	<p>The Regulations refer to a restrictive list of outdated disinfecting solutions, including Glutaraldehyde, which causes occupational asthma, skin rashes, nasal lesions, and is a possible carcinogen.</p> <p>This list does not allow for the use of thermal disinfection, which is considered to be the most suitable, safest and effective form of disinfection for the hairdressing industry.</p> <p>The list also restricts market competitiveness, and restricts industry from accessing a range of products available on the market that have been approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration.</p>
Premise design requirements	<p>The Regulations prescribe a number of premise design requirements. Common grievances relate to the requirement for premises to include a wash basin for every three work stations, which has no substantiate health benefit and bares unnecessary costs to the industry.</p>
Inappropriate application of disinfecting products	<p>Every work station requires 1 litre of disinfecting solution to allow instruments to soak. This is considered to be an ineffective form of disinfection and bares unnecessary costs to the business owner.</p>

## The solution - Industry guideline

It is proposed that the Regulations, if and when repealed, would be replaced with a best practice industry guideline that details standard hygiene and infection control information and industry best practice approaches to managing public health concerns.

The Regulations are now dated and may no longer effectively serve their intended purpose.

Refer to the Public health guideline for the hairdressing and barber industry (PDF 595KB).

## Local government enforcement

Currently, local government have a responsibility to keep a record of all hairdressing establishments within their jurisdiction and routinely inspect hairdressing establishments for compliance with the Regulations.

Due to the low risk nature of the industry, the demand for regular inspections of hairdressing establishments is not necessary and may pose an unnecessary administrative burden for local government.

# Have your say

The Environmental Health Directorate would like to hear your thoughts on the proposed:

1. Repeal of the Hairdressing Establishment Regulations and
2. Draft Public health guideline for the hairdressing and barber industry

## Electronic feedback

Please refer to [www.surveymonkey.com/r/hairdressingreview](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/hairdressingreview). This is our preferred option.

## By mail

Send your comments to:

Environmental Health Directorate  
Att: Hairdressing review  
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