

News



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Connecticut Department of Public Health
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The Connecticut Department of Public Health Expands Warning about Potential Health Effects Associated with the Use of Hair Straightening Products.

Hartford – The Connecticut Department of Public Health is expanding its warning to Connecticut hair salon owners and workers about possible health effects associated with the use of hair straightening products. Earlier this month, the department issued a warning that was limited to a product marketed under the brand name Brazilian Blowout Professional Solution.

Independent research studies in both the US and Canada have indicated the presence of unacceptable levels of formaldehyde in other keratin-based hair straightening and smoothing products, which is released as formaldehyde gas during their application. As a result, the department is expanding its warning to include all hair straightening products that contain greater than 0.1% formaldehyde (sometimes referred to as methylene glycol or formalin) as an ingredient. Salon owners are advised to ask their suppliers about the formaldehyde or methylene glycol content of their hair straightening products.

“Reports of the presence of formaldehyde in these products is troubling, especially because some of them are marketed as ‘formaldehyde free,’” said Department of Public Health Commissioner Dr. J. Robert Galvin. “Our current recommendation to salon owners and workers is to discontinue the use of these products until they are reformulated and further research determines they are safe to use.”

Salon owners and stylists who choose to continue using hair products containing methylene glycol or formaldehyde as an ingredient should do so sparingly and in a very well-ventilated area to avoid exposing themselves and their customers to dangerous concentrations of formaldehyde gas.

Formaldehyde is a respiratory and skin irritant and also has the potential to increase cancer risk in people exposed over long periods of time. Some of the symptoms being reported in association with the use of these formaldehyde-containing salon products include burning eyes, nose, and throat, breathing difficulties and/or heaviness in the chest, sore throats, and fatigue.

Salon owners should also make themselves aware of specific regulatory requirements, including those enforced by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), for workplaces that use and store products containing greater than 0.1% formaldehyde.

Salon owners who purchase products that do not list specific ingredients on the label should contact their distributor to obtain a detailed ingredients list and a material safety data sheet (MSDS) for those products.

The Department of Public Health advises that anyone experiencing health effects that they feel may be the result of the use of keratin-based hair straightening products containing formaldehyde seek the help of a medical professional. Salon operators, stylists, or consumers interested in learning more about potential formaldehyde-related health effects should contact the Connecticut Department of Public Health's Occupational Health Unit at (860) 509-7740 or visit the Department's website at www.ct.gov/dph/occupationalhealth.

The Connecticut Department of Public Health is the state's leader in public health policy and advocacy with a mission to protect and promote the health and safety of the people of our state. To contact the department, please visit its website at www.ct.gov/dph or call (860) 509-7270.

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