

STATE OF COLORADO

BARBER AND COSMETOLOGY LICENSURE

Kevin D. Heupel, Program Director

1560 Broadway, Suite 1340
Denver, Colorado 80202-5146
Phone (303) 894-7772
Fax (303) 894-7764
V/TDD (303) 894-7880
www.dora.state.co.us/barbers_cosmetologists

Department of Regulatory Agencies

Tambor Williams
Executive Director

Division of Registrations

Rosemary McCool
Director



Bill Owens
Governor

CLEAN THOSE FOOTBATHS!

December 2004

Just last month (November 2004), another bacteria outbreak happened in a California salon. Some may remember the situation that happened in Watsonville, California in 2000 where about 110 people were infected at a single nail salon. The cause: dirty pedicure footbaths.

The infection is non-tuberculous mycobacteria, which triggers lesions, oozing sores, boils and skin ulcers on the legs. The latest outbreak is in Santa Clara, California, where about 30 such infections have been confirmed.

The bacteria are commonly found in low levels in water supplies. Under the right conditions, the microbe can breed and more easily infect the skin. Footbaths in some pedicure spas have proved to a place where it thrives. If the footbath is not properly cleaned, the baths collect bits of hair, skin and other debris, becoming breeding grounds for the microscopic pests.

In Colorado, it is mandatory to clean and disinfect the footbath before providing a pedicure service to each client.

Cleaning and disinfecting are two different things. Cleaning is washing with liquid soap and water, detergent, or antiseptics to remove all visible debris from the footbath. Disinfecting is the use of chemicals that destroy pathogens on implements and other nonliving surfaces that renders an item safe for handling, use, and disposal such as EPA-registered bactericidal, fungicidal, or virucidal disinfectants; 10% bleach solution; 70-90% isopropyl alcohol; and 70-90% ethyl alcohol. A footbath can only be disinfected after it is cleaned.

At the end of each day of use, it is mandatory to remove the screen, where bacteria are known to grow, and clean and disinfect the screen. Also, the spa system needs to be flushed with low-suds soap and warm water for 5 minutes, then rinsed and drained.

Once a week, after cleaning and disinfecting the footbath, fill the footbath with cold water and 1 tablespoon of 5.25% bleach for each one gallon of water, circulate the solution through the foot spa system for 5 to 10 minutes and let the solution sit overnight (at least 6 – 10 hours). The following morning and before the first client, drain and flush the system with water and blow out the jets for 3-5 seconds to remove any water remaining.

All of these cleaning and disinfecting procedures need to be done regardless if the footbath is portable or pipeless.

State law requires a record of daily and weekly cleaning and disinfecting procedures be kept. The record for the last 90 days shall be readily accessible and available upon client or an inspector request. The Office of Barbering and Cosmetology has sample footbath cleaning records available on its Web site at www.dora.state.co.us/barbers_cosmetologists.

These rules may seem burdensome, but given the recent events in Santa Clara so soon after Watsonville, the cleaning and disinfecting procedures are necessary to protect the public and salon clients. Moreover, failure to comply can result in disciplinary action and a \$2,000 fine.

Do not let Watsonville and Santa Clara happen here in Colorado, clean those footbaths!