

## **COSTELLO MEDIA ADVISORY**

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Oklahoma Department of Labor and the State Board of Cosmetology Issue Hazard Alert

# **Salon Operators Subject to Federal OSHA Fines**

OKLAHOMA CITY –Today, Labor Commissioner Mark Costello and the State Board of Cosmetology issued a joint Hazard Alert regarding products containing formaldehyde, some of which may be mislabeled. This alert was issued to all Oklahoma salon operators and their employees. Nationwide Federal OSHA citations and fines have ranged up to \$17,500 for failing to protect salon workers. OSHA has cited some manufacturers and distributors for incorrectly labeling formaldehyde containing products, many brands of which are manufactured by foreign interests.

The Hazard Alert warned salons that utilize hair smoothing products may expose employees to unsafe levels of formaldehyde beyond OSHA's standard of exposure, even though labeled "formaldehyde free" as formaldehyde is identified by other compound names such as atmethylene glycol, paraform, or oxomethane.

Stylists inhale the formaldehyde as a gas or vapor and absorb it through their skin when they are applying liquid hair straighteners. Exposures occur during the entire treatment process and particularly when heat is applied, such as blow drying and flat ironing. The recommended procedure is to check labels and material safety data sheets, but with the failure to properly list formaldehyde on labels, stylists are unaware of their exposure.

Oklahoma Department of Labor OSHA Director, Diana Jones said, "If salon owners decide to use products that may contain or release formaldehyde, they must follow the requirements in OSHA's Formaldehyde Standards to protect worker safety and health. This includes air monitoring, worker training, and good ventilation to ensure exposure levels do not exceed OSHA limits."

"OSHA has cited some manufacturers and distributors for incorrectly labeling the products. Throughout the country citations and fines issued include, 3 salons that failed to protect workers from airborne overexposures to formaldehyde, 18 salons and 1 beauty school that failed to protect workers from possible airborne exposure to formaldehyde; and 15 salon owners and 1 beauty school that failed to provide workers with information about hazardous chemicals," states Jones.

To date, Federal OSHA has issued citations to 23 salon owners and beauty schools in Connecticut, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Florida, Illinois, New York, New Jersey and Ohio, with fines ranging up to \$17,500 for failing to protect workers from formaldehyde.

Commissioner Costello said "We want to make sure that salon owners in Oklahoma have the facts and know that our OSHA *Safety Pays* Consultation Program is a free resource to assist them." Commissioner Costello asks that any Salon Operators in Oklahoma contact him to request free consultation by calling 1-888-269-5353 and asking for OSHA *Safety Pays*.