Policy Statement regarding Methyl Methacrylate (MMA)

Adopted by the Board of Cosmetology Arts and Sciences on February 25, 2008.

It is a licensee's responsibility to be aware of and to understand state regulations regarding products containing MMA.

MMA is an ingredient found in some liquid acrylic products. MMA has been deemed poisonous and deleterious by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). It is a violation of 645 Iowa Administrative Code 63.18(1) to possess cosmetic products containing substances deemed hazardous or deleterious by the FDA, including MMA. Violation of this rule could result in discipline, ranging from imposition of civil penalties to license revocation.

Nail technicians must often etch deep into the surface of the nail to make products containing MMA adhere to the natural nail plate, causing the natural nail plate to thin and weaken. Products containing MMA are extremely difficult to remove, because they do not dissolve in product removers. To remove the nail enhancement, it must be pried from the nail plate, creating even more damage.

MMA nail products create a hard and rigid nail enhancement making the nail very difficult to break. If the nail is jammed or caught, the natural nail plate may break because of the over-filing and thinning of the natural nail associated with the use of products containing MMA. This may lead to serious nail damage and possible bacterial infection. MMA can also cause the nail plate to deteriorate or crumble, causing permanent loss of sensation in the finger tips, serious and adverse skin reactions and permanent nail deformities.

MMA usually has a strong and noxious odor. MMA vapors are toxic even in small doses and can cause lung damage, especially with long term exposure. Often salon and nail technicians using MMA use unlabeled containers or will not tell or show the client what brand of product is being used. Anyone who manufactures, sells, distributes or uses products containing MMA is breaking the law, endangering the health of their clients and themselves, and impacting the entire nail profession.

This policy statement is advisory in nature only. It is a method for the Board to express its safety concerns and to provide the public, licensees and other interested parties information regarding the dangers of products containing MMA and the prohibition of their use.