

Check this template against your local regulations and your own policies before you use it.

SOP no.		Version		Effective date	
Owner		Approver		Review date	

Purpose

To make sure every client is consulted before a treatment, patch tested whenever the product maker or our policy requires, and treated only when it's safe, with their consent and the result recorded.

Scope

Every new client, and every existing client before color, lightening, lash and brow tint, chemical straightening or perming, and any skin treatment with a risk of reaction. It applies to all stylists, colorists, therapists and apprentices.

Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Stylist or therapist	Carries out the consultation and patch test, decides whether to go ahead, and records it.
Reception	Books patch tests in time before the appointment and flags clients who need one.
Salon manager	Trains staff, checks the records, and handles any reaction or complaint.

Definitions

Patch test: Applying a small amount of the product to the skin before the treatment, to check for an allergic reaction.

Contraindication: A reason a treatment shouldn't go ahead, or needs a doctor's approval first, such as broken skin or a past reaction.

What you need

- The client consultation card or record
- The product makers' instructions for patch testing
- Cotton buds, a gown and the products to be tested
- A patch test record with the client's signature

Procedure

1. Book the patch test in time

When a client books a service that needs a patch test, book the test for the time the product maker sets before the appointment, often 48 hours.

2. Run the consultation

Go through the consultation card with the client. Ask about allergies, skin and scalp conditions, medication, pregnancy, past reactions to hair dye or tints, and any recent temporary black henna tattoo.

- What the client wants, and their hair or skin history
- Allergies and past reactions to products
- Medication, skin or scalp conditions, and pregnancy
- Any recent temporary black henna tattoo

3. Check for contraindications

Look at the skin or scalp for cuts, sores, swelling or irritation. Don't go ahead if there's a contraindication; refer the client to their doctor where needed.

Caution: Never color or tint a client who has reacted to hair dye before, or who has had a black henna tattoo, without medical advice. Follow the product maker's instructions.

4. Apply the patch test

Apply the product exactly as its maker directs, usually behind the ear or inside the elbow, and record the product, the date and time, and the place on the skin.

5. Tell the client what to look for

Ask them to leave it uncovered and unwashed, and to call the salon and wash it off if they get itching, redness, swelling or burning before the appointment.

6. Check the result before the service

At the appointment, ask about any reaction and look at the test site. Go ahead only if there was no reaction.

Caution: If the client had any reaction, don't carry out the service. Record it and advise them to see a doctor or pharmacist.

7. Record consent and the result

Record the result, the products used and the client's consent on their card, and ask them to sign it.

8. Repeat when required

Patch test again before every service if the maker says so, or as your policy sets, and whenever the client's health or medication changes or they haven't visited for a while.

9. Handle a reaction during or after a service

Rinse the product off at once with plenty of cool water, call emergency services if the client has trouble breathing or swelling of the face, and record it as an incident.

Records

- The consultation card, updated at every visit, kept for as long as your insurer and privacy rules require.
- Patch test records with the product, date, result and the client's signature.
- Incident records for any reaction, with what was done.
- Staff training records for consultations and patch testing.

Related documents

- Salon hygiene and sanitation checklist
- Client records and privacy policy
- First aid procedure
- Complaint handling procedure

Revision history

Version	Date	What changed	Approved by