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Welcome to this edition of *Occupational Health Watch*, an update of recent activities of the California Department of Public Health's Occupational Health Branch (OHB).

Focus on...

Keeping Salon Workers Safe From Chemicals

A groundbreaking settlement between California's Attorney General and manufacturers of Brazilian Blowout hair smoothing products that contain a cancer-causing chemical will help protect salon workers and consumers. OHB's California Safe Cosmetics Program (CSCP) played a key role in the first law enforcement action under California's right-to-know cosmetics law, enacted in 2005.



The settlement with the manufacturer of Brazilian Blowout products requires the company to warn consumers and hair stylists that two of its hair smoothing products emit formaldehyde gas, which is known to cause cancer in humans. The company must also cease deceptive advertising; pay \$600,000 in fees, penalties and costs; and report the presence of formaldehyde in its products to CSCP. The warning requirements are the maximum penalty that could be achieved under state law.

The January 2012 settlement stemmed from complaints from hair stylists and customers that the product was causing symptoms, including nose bleeds, burning eyes and throat, skin irritation, and asthma attacks. A separate \$4.5 million class action lawsuit settlement with the same manufacturer did not involve the Attorney General's Office or CSCP.

California was the first state to pass a disclosure law on chemicals in cosmetic products. The California Safe Cosmetics Act of 2005 requires cosmetics companies to report to CSCP all products sold in California that contain intentionally added ingredients known or suspected to cause cancer, birth defects, or other reproductive harm.

- See <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cosmetics/Documents/BrazilianBlowoutQA.pdf> for a Q&A on Brazilian Blowout products
- See <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cosmetics/Pages/default.aspx> for more on the California Safe Cosmetics Program and cosmetics-related publications

OHB is devoted to improving worker health and safety through prevention activities. We gather information on job hazards, work with others to try out new approaches to prevent worker injury and illness, and provide information to assist people in making changes at the workplace. For more information, visit our website: www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/ohb

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