



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
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DE BLASIO ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCES MULTIFACETED EFFORT TO ADDRESS LABOR ABUSES AND HEALTH RISKS AT CITY'S NAIL SALONS

Comprehensive advocacy and outreach efforts to businesses, workers and consumers is part of City's dedicated efforts to protect vulnerable New Yorkers

Immediate steps include investigations of the industry's products; May 21 'Day of Action' to educate New Yorkers about their rights and responsibilities; letter to FDA and petition to salon industry to ban use of 'Toxic Trio' of chemicals in nail products; and more

City partnering with key elected officials to maximize outreach across the city

NEW YORK—Mayor Bill de Blasio today announced an aggressive advocacy and educational initiative by the City to immediately address labor and health issues at local salons, support salon workers, and educate businesses and consumers.

The State of New York licenses salons and the City of New York has limited jurisdiction over labor and wage laws. The City is executing a wide variety of actions within its powers to address allegations of disturbing conditions in nail salons uncovered by a recent *New York Times* investigation. This effort, led by the Department of Consumer Affairs with support from the Department of Small Business Services, the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence, and others, will include dedicated outreach to and education of workers, employers and consumers, legal investigations and direct actions for New Yorkers to take. Additionally, the Administration is collaborating with City elected officials who have previously initiated action to address these workplace threats, including Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, Public Advocate Letitia James, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., and Council Members Rafael Espinal, Consumer Affairs Chair and Corey Johnson, Health Committee Chair. These partnerships will maximize outreach, education, and technical assistance across the city for business owners, employees, patrons and more regarding potential health hazards and workplace safety.

"Every New Yorker must be protected from predatory workplace practices that threaten their health and exploit their labor," said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. "We will use all available powers to shield nail salon workers from deplorable conditions, empower them with awareness of their rights, and offer every other support we can to ensure the safety and dignity of our hardworking fellow New Yorkers."

"We cannot stand by while the most vulnerable workers among us are exposed to toxic chemicals and equally toxic conditions of employment," **DCA Commissioner Julie Menin** said. "We will harness all the means at our disposal to make sure that salon workers and customers are protected."

Immediate steps include:

- Investigative subpoenas:

- DCA’s Legal Department will investigate, test products, and send subpoenas to manufacturers that make environmental and product claims that may not be valid. DCA will test additional nail products to identify potential for harm.
- DCA’s Legal Department will investigate employment agencies that place workers in nail salons to ensure all such placements are made in jobs that pay at least minimum wage.
- Day of Action, Thursday, May 21:
 - ‘Worker and Consumer Awareness Outreach’: 500 volunteers and City representatives, including the Commissioners of DCA, MOIA and SBS, and other officials, will spread out across the five boroughs to distribute information in multiple languages about workers’ rights, the City’s training and job connection programs, employer obligations and business support services, and consumer tips.
 - ‘Business Education Canvass’: In conjunction with the ‘Day of Action,’ City representatives will stop by 800-1000 salons citywide to inform owners about their responsibilities and resources available to help them.
- Letters to federal regulatory agencies:
 - The City sent a letter to the US Food and Drug Administration calling for a ban on the use of the so-called ‘Toxic Trio’ of chemicals – Formaldehyde, Dibutyl Phthalate and Toluene – in all nail products.
 - The City sent a letter to the Occupational Safety & Health Administration urging the agency to take immediate steps to protect salon workers by providing safety and health consultation services to nail salon owners, reviewing and revising the permissible exposure limits (“PELS”) of toxins in the workplace and by conducting inspections.
- Consumer Petition: This petition tells the Personal Care Products Council, the leading national trade association for the cosmetics industry, that the “price of beauty shouldn’t be your and your manicurist’s health.” The petition can be found [here](#).
- Letter to Salons: A letter is being issued Monday to nearly 3,000 nail salons informing them of their responsibilities under New York’s Paid Sick Leave Law.

Nail salons, hair salons, and related businesses have also been identified as hotspots for labor and sex trafficking of workers, and where employees may also experience domestic violence at home. The City’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence has conducted proactive outreach to more than 1,250 hair and nail salons and related businesses over the past three years, reaching thousands of workers to raise awareness about domestic violence and trafficking, and to connect victims to the services at the NYC Family Justice Centers.

“All New Yorkers have the right to good jobs and healthy work conditions, and we will be working aggressively with our partners in government to ensure nail salon workers are aware of their rights and business owners are aware of their responsibilities,” said **Small Business Services Commissioner Maria Torres-Springer**.

“Too often, immigrant workers face exploitation in a broad range of industries, including nail salons,” said **Commissioner of Immigrant Affairs Nisha Agarwal**. “We are committed to addressing the violation of workers’ rights and supporting the workforce development of immigrant New Yorkers.”

“A coordinated approach by city government such as this will help to strengthen the safety net for trafficking victims who are quite often visible and in plain sight,” said **OCDV Commissioner Rose Pierre-Louis**. “As part

of this effort, we will expand targeted outreach to nail salons to ensure workers who may be victims of human trafficking or intimate partner violence are aware of the comprehensive resources available through the Mayor's Office."

"The New York City Council is proud to lead the way in the fight for justice in the nail salon industry, promoting policies such as increasing the minimum wage and fighting for authority to enforce State labor laws. The Administration's commitment to raise awareness and investigate potential health concerns are important steps in our shared mission to combat deplorable and widespread abuse of nail salon employees," said **Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito**. "New York City has a clear obligation to ensure that these workers are treated with the respect and dignity they deserve, and we are committed to working with business owners, employees, and consumers to meet this crucial goal."

"I applaud Mayor de Blasio for taking these important steps to protect workers at nail salons against harsh working conditions and wage theft. At a recent Consumer Affairs Committee hearing I held discussing the industry, we heard why better regulations need to be in place. I look forward to working with the Mayor and DCA Commissioner Menin to ensure that all New Yorkers are protected from the potential risks posed by unsanitary nail salons and the products they use," said **Council Member Rafael Espinal, Chair of the Committee on Consumer Affairs**.

"We cannot allow any New Yorkers to work in the shadows, subject to inexcusable abuse and exposed to harmful conditions on a daily basis," said **Council Member Corey Johnson, Chair of the Committee on Health**. "No one should ever be sacrificing their safety to make a living for themselves and their families, yet this has been the case for many of our City's most vulnerable who have immigrated here with few resources, language barriers and a desperate need for work. I commend the Department of Consumer Affairs, the Department of Small Business Services and the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs for leading the effort to ensure that those who work in New York City's nail salons are no longer at risk of exploitation, abuse and harmful substances in their work places."

Information and tips on what consumers, salon workers and salon owners need to know can be found on [DCA's website](#).

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