



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR
Jessica Ramos

Long-awaited Ventilation Regulations in Nail Salons to be Implemented October 4, 2022

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NEW YORK - Nail technicians and their advocates celebrated today as the long awaited ventilation requirements for nail salon establishments officially went into full effect today.

“I’m so grateful that finally after so many years of waiting and holding our breath, these ventilation standards are finally into effect. As any worker, nail techs like me wish for health and safety at the workplace, and a chance at a long and dignified life. We won these ventilation regulations back in 2016, but we realized we had to keep fighting for implementation, and now it’s six years later. It’s better late than never, and the day is finally here,” said **Goma Y.G., Member leader and Fellow at Adhikaar.**

“In order to do their part in ensuring the small businesses that employ them made it through the pandemic, workers compromised on a delay of the implementation of these ventilation standards. The choice between their livelihood and their health is not one we should be asking workers to make. I’m glad to see these upgrades go into effect. This instance of compromise signals that finding middle ground solutions that bring nail salon owners and their employees together is the best way to protect this industry,” said **Senator Jessica Ramos, Chair of the Senate Labor Committee** and sponsor of the [Nail Salon Minimum Standards Council Act](#). This legislation would give workers a seat at the table alongside government and small business owners to collaborate on new baseline health, safety and wage standards across the nail salon industry.

Ventilation regulations were adopted in 2016 after a wave of organizing by nail techs prompted emergency governmental investigations into the industry, demonstrating it was in serious need of reforms. Ventilation requirements for all nail salons were put into place to protect workers and consumers from toxic chemicals frequently used in nail salons.

Existing nail salon businesses were initially given 5 years to comply, and regulations were set to go into effect on October 4, 2021. However, citing difficulties borne by the COVID-19 pandemic, these requirements were delayed twice by the Department of State, giving businesses another year to come into compliance with the requirements.

Without proper ventilation where they work, nail technicians – who are [overwhelmingly AAPI and Latinx women](#) – put themselves at increased risk every day for serious health issues like miscarriages, cancer and asthma. Recent data analyzed from 142 nail salon worker surveys by the New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health (NYCOSH) revealed higher prevalence of reproductive health issues among nail techs, including severe pain with menstruation, complications during pregnancy, and birth defects in their children. Key findings included:

- 20% of nail techs reported that they have had issues with their reproductive health, compared to 11% of U.S. women of reproductive age who have had fertility problems and 11% of all U.S. women between 15 and 44 who have endometriosis;
- 25% of nail techs reported that they had complications during their pregnancy, compared to 8% of all pregnancies in the general population;
- Nail techs were more than three times as likely to have babies born with birth defects than the general population.

“For decades, workers have spoken about reproductive damage as a result of their chemical exposure in nail salons. The results of our survey show what workers have consistently said about their health and well-being. Ventilation regulations are essential to reducing this exposure and helping to create healthier nail salons for workers, customers, and owners alike. This is not just a workers’ rights issue, it’s a reproductive justice issue,” said **Charlene Obernauer, Executive Director of the New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health (NYCOSH)**.

The New York Healthy Nail Salons Coalition (“NYHNSC”) is a coalition created in 2014 to transform the New York nail salon industry into healthy and just workplaces. Since its founding, the coalition has won the Nail Salon Workers’ Bill of Rights in 2015, and successfully advocated to eliminate the tipped subminimum wage for nail salon workers in 2019.

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