

BARBERING SCOPE OF PRACTICE

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

WHY IS THE SCOPE OF PRACTICE CHANGING?

- The scope of practice for barbering is not changing. In fact, it's never changed.
- Virginia Code [§ 54.1-700](#) defines barbering and determines the scope of practice, or what is allowed under the license. State law has not changed, and the definition of barbering remains the same.
- The issue is focused on the barber school curriculum in the REGULATIONS, which incorrectly reference topics that fall outside the scope of practice.
- For many years, barber students learned *Styling the Hair with a Hand Dryer, Thermal Waving, Permanent Waving with Chemicals, Wig Care, and Lightening or Toning the Hair*—but these services are not identified in the statutory definition of barbering.

SO WHAT IS CHANGING? AND WHY?

- The Board for Barbers and Cosmetology is **clarifying** the legal scope of practice for barbering, and **updating** the barber exam and school coursework to make sure they align with state law.
- Barbers and barber shops offering chemical texture services, thermal waving, styling, wig care, waxing, hair lightening, etc.—even if the services were included as part of a barber school curriculum—are operating outside the scope of barbering.
- The Board's barber committee, in coordination with the Office of Attorney General, determined these services are not identified in the statutory definition of barbering, and are outside the scope of the barber license.
- At its August 21, 2017, meeting, the Board adopted the barber committee's recommendation that the non-compliant barber school curriculum components be addressed as quickly as possible.
- The Board also issued guidance and directed staff to send letters to barber schools with instructions for implementing changes, and to licensees reminding them of the statutory scope of practice.

HOW SOON DOES THIS TAKE EFFECT?

- Any barbers or barber shops offering these out-of-scope services should **discontinue immediately**.
- The Board is advising barber schools to revise their curriculum by removing the out-of-scope procedures and reducing program length from 1,500 hours to 1,100 hours.
- Schools should continue teaching students their current board-approved programs until the revised, shorter curriculum is reviewed and approved. The Board has implemented a process to quickly review and accept the necessary changes.
- In order to remain in compliance with state law, barber schools and students **must not** perform out-of-scope procedures on the public for compensation.

WHAT ARE BARBERS ALLOWED TO DO?

- State law defines "Barbering" as:
any one or any combination of the following acts, when done on the human body for compensation and not for the treatment of disease: shaving, shaping and trimming the beard; cutting, singeing, shampooing or dyeing the hair or applying lotions thereto; applications, treatment or massages of the face, neck or scalp with oils, creams, lotions, cosmetics, antiseptics, powders, clays, or other preparations in connection with shaving, cutting or trimming the hair or a beard."
- This means **the only services allowed under the Barber license** are:
 - Beards: shaving, shaping, trimming
 - Hair: cutting, singeing, shampooing, dyeing, applying lotions
 - Beard/hair-related applications or treatments involving oils, creams, cosmetics, etc. (including face, neck, or scalp massages)

WHAT SERVICES ARE BARBERS NOT ALLOWED TO PERFORM?

- Because **permanent waving with chemicals, thermal waving, styling, wig care, waxing, and lightening the hair** are not in the statutory definition of barbering, they are outside the scope of licensure and barbers should discontinue performing these services immediately.
- As the law is currently written, these services fall under cosmetology. Barbers and barber shops that wish to continue performing these services need to obtain a cosmetology license (for individuals) and a cosmetology salon license (for businesses).

HOW DO I GET A COSMETOLOGY LICENSE?

- Only a cosmetology license will allow individual barbers to perform the out-of-scope services. There are several ways for barbers to qualify to take the exam required to obtain a cosmetology license:
 - **A licensed barber who has two years of experience** can apply for the cosmetology exam directly with the vendor, Professional Credential Services, Inc. (PCS). An experience verification form documenting two years' experience will be required, along with other application documents.
 - **Barbers can complete a registered cosmetology apprenticeship** and obtain a cosmetology license by examination. Cosmetology apprenticeships are 3,000 hours and are administered through the Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI). Barbers can obtain credit towards apprenticeship hours based on their barber training and experience.
 - **Barbers can complete the 1,500-hour cosmetology program** at a licensed Virginia cosmetology school. Barbers can apply some of the hours from their already-completed barber program toward the cosmetology coursework.

HOW DO I GET A COSMETOLOGY SALON LICENSE?

- Barber shops that wish to obtain a cosmetology salon license can apply directly to the Board.
- Cosmetology salon licenses require a complete application, fee, and documentation of the fictitious/doing-business-as (DBA) name.

QUESTIONS?

BOARD FOR BARBERS AND COSMETOLOGY

Applicants/Licensees

(804) 367-8509

BCHOPLicensing@dpor.virginia.gov

Schools

(804) 367-8509

BarberCosmo@dpor.virginia.gov