



For questions, comments, or complaints, contact the Board.

**BOARD OF BARBERING AND COSMETOLOGY**

2420 DEL PASO ROAD, SUITE 100  
SACRAMENTO, CA 95834

[www.barbercosmo.ca.gov](http://www.barbercosmo.ca.gov)

800-952-5210



# WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE CHOOSING A COSMETOLOGY SCHOOL

## MISSION OF THE BOARD

Ensuring the health and safety of California consumers by promoting ethical standards and by enforcing the laws of the beauty and barbering industry.

### WHY DO I NEED A LICENSE?

Cosmetologists, estheticians, and manicurists are licensed and regulated in California by the Board of Barbering and Cosmetology. The Board works to ensure that these licensees follow state law and infection control standards to protect consumers.

### WHICH LICENSE TYPE SHOULD I GET?

Think about which types of services you would want to provide. Note that cosmetologists (hair, skin, and nail care) can provide the same services as estheticians (skin care) and manicurists (nail care).

### DOES THE BOARD RECOMMEND SCHOOLS?

The Board can not recommend particular schools. The Board developed this pamphlet to help prospective students know what to look for in a cosmetology school.



## THE PRACTICE OF COSMETOLOGY IS ALL OR ANY COMBINATION OF THE FOLLOWING PRACTICES:

- Arranging, dressing, curling, waving, machineless permanent waving, permanent waving, cleansing, cutting, shampooing, relaxing, singeing, bleaching, tinting, coloring, straightening, dyeing, applying hair tonics to, beautifying, or otherwise treating by any means the hair of any person.
- Massaging, cleaning, or stimulating the scalp, face, neck, arms, or upper part of the human body, by means of the hands, devices, apparatus or appliances, with or without the use of cosmetic preparations, antiseptics, tonics, lotions, or creams.<sup>1</sup>
- Beautifying the face, neck, arms, or upper part of the human body, by use of cosmetic preparations, antiseptics, tonics, lotions, or creams.<sup>1</sup>
- Removing superfluous hair from the body of any person by the use of depilatories or by the use of tweezers, chemicals or preparations, or by the use of devices or appliances of any kind or description, except by the use of light waves, commonly known as rays.<sup>1</sup>
- Cutting, trimming, polishing, tinting, coloring, cleansing, or manicuring the nails of any person.<sup>2</sup>
- Massaging, cleansing, treating, or beautifying the hands or feet of any person.<sup>2</sup>
- Tinting and perming of the eyelashes and brows, or applying eyelashes to any person.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> included in the practice of skin care

<sup>2</sup> included in the practice of nail care

## BOARD-APPROVED COSMETOLOGY SCHOOLS

The Board approves schools of cosmetology. For a school to be approved by the Board, it must meet the Board's minimum curriculum requirements. Courses taught by schools not approved by the Board will not be recognized and any hours obtained taking these courses and any certificates received will not qualify you for a Board examination.

The Board does not approve of manicuring, esthetics, makeup, or eyelash extension schools. Any services that fall under cosmetology must be taught in an approved cosmetology school that meets all school requirements and offers the full cosmetology course. A list of **approved schools** can be found on the Board's website at: [www.barbercosmo.ca.gov/schools/approved\\_schools.pdf](http://www.barbercosmo.ca.gov/schools/approved_schools.pdf).

The curriculum minimum hours are as follows:

- Cosmetology = 1,000 hours
- Esthetics = 600 hours
- Manicuring = 400 hours

Schools may offer programs that exceed the minimum hours. If the minimum program requirements of the school exceed the minimum requirements for state licensure, the school shall disclose this, including a list of those programs that are not required for state licensure. Please check with schools about which programs they offer.



## RESEARCH THE SCHOOL

Using the Board's list of approved schools, visit the school's website, call, or visit the campus to learn about their programs offered, curriculum, tuition costs, student services, and more. Look online for reviews from past students. Research multiple schools to see which would be the right fit for you.

To obtain a cosmetologist, esthetician, or manicurist license, you will need to pass a written licensing exam. You can review a school's **pass/fail rates** for the licensing exam at: [www.barbercosmo.ca.gov/schools/schls\\_rslts.shtml](http://www.barbercosmo.ca.gov/schools/schls_rslts.shtml).



## ACCREDITATION

Accreditation is the recognition from an accrediting agency that an institution maintains a certain level of educational standards. The U.S. Department of Education maintains a database of accrediting agencies it recognizes at: <https://ope.ed.gov/dapip>. The Board can not make any recommendations on accrediting agencies.

Accreditation ensures a certain level of academic quality. Accreditation means a school demonstrates positive student outcomes, like retention, graduation, and employment. Schools approved by the Board are not required to be accredited, but that is something to recognize when researching schools.



## CURRICULUM

The curriculum for a **cosmetology** course shall, at a minimum, include technical and practical instruction in the following areas:

- 100 hours in health and safety
- 100 hours in disinfection and sanitation
- 200 hours in chemical hair services
- 200 hours in hairstyling services
- 150 hours in skin care services
- 50 hours in hair removal and lash and brow beautification
- 100 hours in manicure and pedicure

The curriculum for an **esthetic (skin care)** course shall, at a minimum, include technical and practical instruction in the following areas:

- 100 hours in health and safety
- 100 hours in disinfection and sanitation
- 350 hours in skin care
- 50 hours in hair removal and lash and brow beautification

The curriculum for a **nail care** course shall, at a minimum, include the technical and practical instruction in the following areas:

- 100 hours in health and safety
- 100 hours in disinfection and sanitation
- 150 hours in manicure and pedicure

For additional minimum curriculum requirement information, please review Business and Professions Code sections 7362.5, 7364, and 7365.

## FILING A COMPLAINT

The Board has jurisdiction over Board-approved schools for violations of the Barbering and Cosmetology Act and Regulations regarding health and safety issues, meeting minimum equipment requirements, and/or operating without approval from the Board. If you have concerns under the Board's jurisdiction, you may file a complaint on the Board's website at: <https://barbercosmo.ca.gov/enforcement/complaint.shtml>. You may also submit a complaint if a school offers to sell you hours or is not teaching the required curriculum.

## THE BUREAU FOR PRIVATE POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

All schools must meet the minimum operating requirements in order to legally operate. The Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (BPPE) protects students and consumers through the oversight of California's private postsecondary educational institutions.

If you have concerns regarding fraud, contractual issues (enrollment agreement not followed), unqualified faculty, operating without BPPE approval, and disciplinary actions taken by another state or state agency, you can visit BPPE's website at [www.bppe.ca.gov](http://www.bppe.ca.gov), call toll-free at (888) 370-7589, or email: [bppe@dca.ca.gov](mailto:bppe@dca.ca.gov).

