

Stylist article – January 2020

Scope of Practice Q&A

Q: What does the Board of Barbering and Cosmetology mean by “scope of practice”?

A: The scope of practice refers to the various services that a licensee is allowed to perform under the law. In California, the scopes of practice for each of the barbering and cosmetology professions are defined in Section 7316 of the Business and Professions Code.

Q: Does natural hair braiding, threading or styling wigs have to be performed in a licensed establishment?

A: No. None of those services is regulated by the Board of Barbering and Cosmetology; therefore, they need not be performed by in a licensed establishment by Board licensees. However, you should become familiar with the scopes of practice in Section 7316 to make sure you do not cross over into a regulated service.

Q: I want to work in a department store demonstrating hair, skin and nail products on customers. Do I need an esthetician’s license?

A: No, provided the only purpose of the demonstration is to sell the products rather than to provide beautification services. Theatrical makeup artists are not required to be licensed by the Board, either.

Q: Does a person who only shampoos hair in a salon need to be licensed?

A: Yes. Shampooing hair is part of the scope of practice of cosmetologists and barbers. Only licensed individuals can provide that service.

Q: I’m a licensed manicurist. Can I use a credo blade to remove a callus?

A: Absolutely not. The use of any razor-edged tool or device of any kind to remove calluses is strictly forbidden. In fact, these tools are forbidden from even being on an establishment’s premises. Calluses can only be smoothed by Board licensees, not removed. Needle-like instruments used to extract blemishes and other procedures are also prohibited.

Q: Who can perform microdermabrasion?

A: Both licensed estheticians and cosmetologists can perform microdermabrasion, provided the service only applies to the non-living layer of the skin, or epidermis. Any skin removal techniques and practices that affect the living layers of the skin, known as the dermis, are considered the practice of medicine and are outside the scope of Board of Barbering and Cosmetology licensees. Remember — Board licensees should only be providing beautification services.

Q: I would like to offer facial shaving at my salon. Is that allowed?

A: Yes, but only if the person performing the facial shaving is a licensed barber (and you have an establishment license for your salon). Shaving of the beard is only within the scope of practice for barbers.

Q: I'm an esthetician and would like to offer ear candling to my clients. Can I do this legally?

A: No. Ear candling is outside the scope of practice for all Board of Barbering and Cosmetology licensees. The U.S. Federal Drug Administration (FDA) classifies the ear candle as a device which is specific to medical use. Licensees within the jurisdiction of the California Board of Barbering and Cosmetology would be in violation for using procedures not approved by the FDA and by using medical devices which are beyond their scope of practice.

Q: I've read about these fish pedicures that are popular overseas. Can I offer this service in my salon?

A: No. The Board has reviewed this service and has determined that using live fish for pedicures violates the Board's rules regarding disinfection.

Q: Does my cosmetology license allow me to offer services in my clients' homes?

A: No. All barbering and cosmetology services offered by Board licensees must be performed in a licensed establishment. The only exception is performing services on people who are shut-ins and physically unable to get to a shop. There is a license available for mobile units, but the services must be performed inside the mobile unit.

