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## Board of Cosmetology

Fact Sheet: Airbrush Tanning

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## Airbrush Tanning: State Looks to Safeguard Popular Alternative to UV-based Tanning Systems

Most everyone knows that UV rays from the sun—and from traditional tanning beds or booths—may be detrimental to your health. But what about airbrush tanning? Here is a quick look at what is known about the relatively new but growing practice and why the Oregon Health Licensing Agency (OHLA) and Board of Cosmetology have pursued regulation to protect consumers.

**Why Regulate?** Two reasons: 1) concerns over internal exposure to the spray solution used in airbrush tanning; 2) airbrush tanning fits the statutory definition of esthetics (“...The use of the hands or mechanical or electrical apparatuses or appliances for cleansing, stimulating, manipulating, exfoliating or applying lotions or creams...” to keep skin “...healthy and attractive....”)

**How Dangerous?** The U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) has determined that the most widely used color additive in airbrush tanning solutions—*dihydroxyacetone*, or DHA—is restricted to external application. While DHA has been approved by the FDA as a tanner since 1977, it shouldn't be sprayed in or on the mouth, eyes or nose. FDA officials, being cautious, state that DHA should not be ingested, inhaled or exposed to the eye area or mucous membranes because “the risks, if any, are unknown.”

**What Precautions?** The FDA recommends protective measures for the eyes, nose and mucous membranes:

- Goggles for the eyes
- Nose plug for nostrils
- Ear plug for ears
- Balm or other coating for lips

**Regulation Underway?** Yes. However, OHLA and the Board of Cosmetology are allowing for a transition period until the end of 2006 to provide practitioners time to gain the required education without causing undue hardship on existing airbrush tanning businesses and professionals.

For more information on airbrush tanning, esthetics and cosmetology, visit OHLA's Web site at [www.oregon.gov/OHLA](http://www.oregon.gov/OHLA).