
Barbers, Cosmetologists, and Other Personal Appearance Workers

(O*NET 39-5011.00, 39-5012.00, 39-5091.00, 39-5092.00, 39-5093.00, 39-5094.00)

Significant Points

- A State license is required for barbers, cosmetologists, and most other personal appearance workers, although qualifications vary by State.
- About 46 percent of workers are self employed; many also work flexible schedules.

Nature of the Work

Barbers and cosmetologists focus on providing hair care services to enhance the appearance of consumers. Other personal appearance workers, such as manicurists and pedicurists, shampooers, theatrical and performance makeup artists, and skin care specialists provide specialized beauty services that help clients look and feel their best.

Barbers cut, trim, shampoo, and style hair mostly for male clients. They also may fit hairpieces and offer scalp treatments and facial shaving. In many States, barbers are licensed to color, bleach, or highlight hair and to offer permanent-wave services. Barbers also may provide skin care and nail treatments.

Hairdressers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists offer a wide range of beauty services, such as shampooing, cutting, coloring, and styling of hair. They may advise clients on how to care for their hair at home. In addition, cosmetologists may be trained to give manicures, pedicures, and scalp and facial treatments; provide makeup analysis; and clean and style wigs and hairpieces.

A number of workers offer specialized services. *Manicurists and pedicurists*, called *nail technicians* in some States, work exclusively on nails and provide manicures, pedicures, polishing, and nail extensions to clients. Another group of specialists is *skin care specialists*, or *estheticians*, who cleanse and beautify the skin by giving facials, full-body treatments, and head and neck massages as well as apply makeup. They also may remove hair through waxing or, if properly trained, laser



Manicurists and pedicurists rank among the fastest growing occupations.

treatments. *Theatrical and performance makeup artists*, apply makeup to enhance performing artists' appearance for movie, television, or stage performances. Finally, in larger salons, *shampooers* specialize in shampooing and conditioning hair.

In addition to working with clients, personal appearance workers may keep records of hair color or skin care regimens used by their regular clients. A growing number actively sell hair, skin, and nail care products. Barbers, cosmetologists, and other personal appearance workers who operate their own salons have managerial duties that may include hiring, supervising, and firing workers, as well as keeping business and inventory records, ordering supplies, and arranging for advertising.

Work environment. Most full-time barbers, cosmetologists, and other personal appearance workers put in a 40-hour week, but longer hours are common, especially among self-employed workers. Work schedules may include evenings and weekends, the times when beauty salons and barbershops are busiest. In 2006, about 31 percent of cosmetologists and 19 percent of barbers worked part time, and 16 percent of cosmetologists and 11 percent of barbers had variable schedules.

Barbers, cosmetologists, and other personal appearance workers usually work in clean, pleasant surroundings with good lighting and ventilation. Good health and stamina are important, because these workers are on their feet for most of their shift. Prolonged exposure to some hair and nail chemicals may cause irritation, so protective clothing, such as plastic gloves or aprons, may be worn.

Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

All States require barbers, cosmetologists, and other personal appearance workers to be licensed, with the exceptions of shampooers and makeup artists. To qualify for a license, most job seekers are required to graduate from a State-licensed barber or cosmetology school.

Education and training. A high school diploma or GED is required for some personal appearance workers in some States. In addition, most States require that barbers and cosmetologists complete a program in a State-licensed barber or cosmetology school. Programs in hairstyling, skin care, and other personal appearance services can be found in both high schools and in public or private postsecondary vocational schools.

Full-time programs in barbering and cosmetology usually last 9 months and may lead to an associate degree, but training for manicurists and pedicurists and skin care specialists requires significantly less time. Makeup artists can attend schools that specialize in this subject, but it is not required. Shampooers generally do not need formal training. Most professionals take advanced courses in hairstyling or other personal appearance services to keep up with the latest trends. They also may take courses in sales and marketing.

During their first weeks on the job, new workers may be given relatively simple tasks. Once they have demonstrated their skills, they are gradually permitted to perform more complicated procedures, such as coloring hair. As they continue to work in the field, more training usually is required to help workers learn the techniques particular to each salon and to build on the basics learned in cosmetology school. Personal appearance workers attend training at salons, cosmetology schools, or industry trade shows throughout their careers.

Licensure. All States require barbers, cosmetologists, and other personal appearance workers to be licensed, with the exceptions of shampooers and makeup artists. Qualifications for a license vary by State, but generally a person must have a high school diploma or GED, be at least 16 years old, and have graduated from a State-licensed barber or cosmetology school. After graduating from a State approved training program, students take a State licensing examination. The exam consists of a written test and, in some cases, a practical test of styling skills or an oral examination. In many States, cosmetology training may be credited toward a barbering license, and vice versa, and a few States combine the two licenses. Most States require separate licensing examinations for manicurists, pedicurists, and skin care specialists.

Some States have reciprocity agreements that allow licensed barbers and cosmetologists to obtain a license in a different State without additional formal training, but such agreements are uncommon. Consequently, persons who wish to work in a particular State should review the laws of that State before entering a training program.

Other qualifications. Successful personal appearance workers should have an understanding of fashion, art, and technical design. They also must keep a neat personal appearance and a clean work area. Interpersonal skills, image, and attitude play an important role in career success. As client retention and retail sales become an increasingly important part of salons' revenue, the ability to be an effective salesperson becomes ever more vital for salon workers. Some cosmetology schools consider "people skills" to be such an integral part of the job that they require coursework in that area. Business skills are important for those who plan to operate their own salons.

Advancement. Advancement usually takes the form of higher earnings as barbers and cosmetologists gain experience and build a steady clientele. Some barbers and cosmetologists manage salons, lease booth space in salons, or open their own salons after several years of experience. Others teach in barber or cosmetology schools or provide training through vocational schools. Still others advance to become sales representatives, image or fashion consultants, or examiners for State licensing boards.

Projections data from the National Employment Matrix

| Occupational Title | SOC Code | Employment, 2006 | Projected employment, 2016 | Change, 2006-16 | |
|---|----------|------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|---------|
| | | | | Number | Percent |
| Personal appearance workers | 39-5000 | 825,000 | 942,000 | 117,000 | 14 |
| Barbers and cosmetologists..... | 39-5010 | 677,000 | 755,000 | 77,000 | 11 |
| Barbers | 39-5011 | 60,000 | 61,000 | 600 | 1 |
| Hairdressers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists..... | 39-5012 | 617,000 | 694,000 | 77,000 | 12 |
| Miscellaneous personal appearance workers..... | 39-5090 | 148,000 | 187,000 | 39,000 | 27 |
| Makeup artists, theatrical and performance | 39-5091 | 2,100 | 3,000 | 900 | 40 |
| Manicurists and pedicurists..... | 39-5092 | 78,000 | 100,000 | 22,000 | 28 |
| Shampooers..... | 39-5093 | 29,000 | 33,000 | 3,900 | 13 |
| Skin care specialists | 39-5094 | 38,000 | 51,000 | 13,000 | 34 |

NOTE: Data in this table are rounded. See the discussion of the employment projections table in the *Handbook* introductory chapter on *Occupational Information Included in the Handbook*.

Employment

Barbers, cosmetologists, and other personal appearance workers held about 825,000 jobs in 2006. Of these, barbers and cosmetologists held 677,000 jobs, manicurists and pedicurists 78,000, skin care specialists 38,000, and shampooers 29,000. Theatrical and performance makeup artists held 2,100 jobs.

Most of these workers are employed in beauty salons or barber shops, but they also are found in nail salons, day and resort spas, and nursing and other residential care homes. Nearly every town has a barbershop or beauty salon, but employment in this occupation is concentrated in the most populous cities and States. Theatrical and performance makeup artists work for movie and television studios, performing arts companies, and event promoters. Some apply makeup in retail stores.

About 46 percent of all barbers, cosmetologists, and other personal appearance workers are self-employed. Many of these workers own their own salon, but a growing number of the self-employed lease booth space or a chair from the salon's owner.

Job Outlook

Overall employment of barbers, cosmetologists, and other personal appearance workers is projected to grow slightly faster than the average for all occupations. Opportunities for entry level workers should be favorable, while job candidates at high-end establishments will face keen competition.

Employment change. Personal appearance workers will grow by 14 percent from 2006 to 2016, which is faster than the average for all occupations. This growth primarily will be a result of an increasing population and from the growing demand for personal appearance services, particularly skin care services.

Employment trends are expected to vary among the different occupational specialties. Employment of hairdressers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists should increase by 12 percent because many now cut and style both men's and women's hair and because the demand for hair treatment by teens and aging baby boomers is expected to remain steady or even grow. As a result, fewer people are expected to go to barber shops and employment of barbers is expected to see relatively little change in employment.

Continued growth in the number of nail salons and full-service day spas will generate numerous job openings for manicurists, pedicurists, and skin care specialists. Employment

of manicurists and pedicurists will grow by 28 percent, while employment of shampooers will increase by 13 percent. Estheticians and other skin care specialists will see large gains in employment, and are expected to grow 34 percent as more facial procedures to improve one's complexion become available and become more popular in spas and some medical settings. Makeup artists are expected to grow by 40 percent, but because of its relatively small size, the occupation will only add a few hundred jobs over the decade.

Job prospects. Job opportunities generally should be good. However, competition is expected for jobs and clients at higher paying salons as applicants compete with a large pool of licensed and experienced cosmetologists for these positions. More numerous than those arising from job growth, an abundance of job openings will come about from the need to replace workers who transfer to other occupations, retire, or leave the labor force for other reasons. Opportunities will be best for those with previous experience and for those licensed to provide a broad range of services.

Earnings

Median hourly earnings in May 2006 for salaried hairdressers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists, including tips and commission, were \$10.25. The middle 50 percent earned between \$7.92 and \$13.75. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$6.68, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$18.78.

Median hourly earnings in May 2006 for salaried barbers, including tips, were \$11.13. The middle 50 percent earned between \$8.71 and \$14.25. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$7.12, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$20.56.

Among skin care specialists, median hourly earnings, including tips, were \$12.58, for manicurists and pedicurists \$9.23, and for shampooers \$7.78.

While earnings for entry-level workers usually are low, earnings can be considerably higher for those with experience. A number of factors, such as the size and location of the salon, determine the total income of personal appearance workers. They may receive commissions based on the price of the ser-

vice, or a salary based on the number of hours worked, and many receive commissions on the products they sell. In addition, some salons pay bonuses to employees who bring in new business. For many personal appearance workers the ability to attract and hold regular clients are key factors in determining earnings.

Although some salons offer paid vacations and medical benefits, many self-employed and part-time workers in this occupation do not enjoy such benefits. Some personal appearance workers receive free trial products from manufacturers in the hope that they will recommend the products to clients.

Related Occupations

Other workers who provide a personal service to clients and are usually professionally licensed or certified include massage therapists and fitness workers.

Sources of Additional Information

For details on State licensing requirements and approved barber or cosmetology schools, contact your State boards of barber or cosmetology examiners.

State licensing board requirements and a list of licensed training schools for cosmetologists may be obtained from:

► National Accrediting Commission of Cosmetology Arts and Sciences, 4401 Ford Ave., Suite 1300, Alexandria, VA 22302.

Internet: <http://www.naccas.org>

Information about a career in cosmetology is available from:

► National Cosmetology Association, 401 N. Michigan Ave., 22nd floor, Chicago, IL 60611.

Internet: <http://www.ncacares.org>

For information on a career as a barber, contact:

► National Association of Barber Boards of America, 2703 Pine Street, Arkadelphia, AR 71923.

Internet: <http://www.nationalbarberboards.com>

An additional list of private schools for several different types of personal appearance workers is available from:

► Beauty Schools Directory.

Internet: <http://www.beautyschoolsdirectory.com>