

A VETERAN SALON OWNER AND THE GUEST WHO WON'T BE "ASKED"

By Brenda Fishbaugh

I recently received this email from a salon owner who has asked to stay anonymous because he doesn't want to be publicly disrespectful to a guest; so, I call him "Owner" here.

Owner wrote to me:

We have a few customers who insist that having our staff check eye protection is not needed and that the law doesn't actually require it. The wording of the code is a bit ambiguous to me. It clearly says eye protection is required, but it doesn't say that the salons in our state MUST check each time. I wondered if you had something we could use to better defend the eye protection requirement. Our guest claims she uses them, but us checking is "insulting" and she doesn't want to be "treated like a child." Any help is appreciated.

Owner wrote to his "insulted" tanner (in part):

We understand that not everyone likes to use or show eye protection, but it is Federal Law that FDA-compliant

eye protection must be worn to use a UV tanning bed. Anything other than FDA-complaint eye protection does not comply with the law. Even if there were no official government requirement, we would still require it. It is my feeling this safety requirement comes with nearly no downside.

Due to COVID, we no longer offer communal eye protection. This means each person must have their own pair. It also means that before we can let someone into a room, we need to physically see that eye protection. Our intention is simply to follow the law and encourage the safest tanning environment that we can.

To be clear, on each visit you will be required to show FDA-compliant eye protection, or you will be refused service. To make it easier for you, I have added \$0.50 to your account so you can redeem it for a free pair of disposable eye protection. If for some reason you prefer not to tan rather than show your eye protection, please let me know and we will refund you.

I thought Owner's response was great. When we spoke on the phone, I learned that he had 17 years of experience in tanning. Owner shared, "The hardest thing about responding to this customer was that I wanted to be respectful, but firm. I thought it was important for her to understand why we require eye protection (for her safety) while not trying to hide behind a policy or pass the blame. The reason I added fifty cents on her account was to remove any barriers she might have, such as, 'I didn't bring any money', etc."

Here are some additional thoughts I provided to Owner:

First, I'm sure your insurance carrier requires you to check age, skin type and that the tanner wears eyewear for every session. If a guest had a vision issue, they could sue you and you could lose your business! Not worth it to appease a couple of people who don't want to be asked.

You can also say, "Our goal is to protect you. UV is bad for our eyes – it causes cataracts, night blindness, color vision damage and much more. We certainly want to do our part to protect your vision and reduce our liability."

Also, if you have taken the Sun Is Life® Training, they insist that you ask to see every guest's eyewear. You can mention it's part of your staff certification process.

Here's the link to the Wink-Ease 30-minute eye protection training – get educational materials and "Eye Protection Expert" certificates for your staff who complete it. It's free at eyepro.net/24-7-training/

Unfortunately, Owner's "insulted" guest didn't return. Would you have said something different? Let me know your approach and you may be featured in a future column. ■



About the Author:

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extensively training salons on the effects of UV light on vision. **EYE PRO**