



In my October column, I wrote about a longtime salon operator who recently encountered a couple of guests who didn't like being asked to show the salon staff their eyewear before being able to tan. They felt it was demeaning and they were being treated like babies.

I am not making this up! I was contacted by a tanner in my state – Indiana – who wanted to know if it was the law that he had to prove he had eye protection. I sent him the 14-page Indiana law (with a three-page synopsis) and covered the several sections in Indiana regulations that stress the importance of eyewear. He wrote to me twice more, stating that even though the law states eyewear must be worn during a session, the law didn't explicitly say he had to show his eyewear to salon staff every time, and he felt that he was being treated like a baby!

I asked several salon operators how they handle this situation with their salon tanners who feel the same way.

Melissa Laribee, Owner of Golden Goddess Tanning Boutique in Colchester, CT said:

"If only two customers are having an issue out of ALL your customers, I would just tell them it's really simple: This is the rule here and if they don't like it, they don't have to come back! My bottom line is that it's YOUR salon and YOUR rules and you are only trying to protect them. We aren't asking for anything out of the ordinary: when they tan, they have to wear eye protection and since we can't be in the room with them to make sure they do it, the next best thing is to at least make sure they have it."

Tabitha Camp, Tab's Tanning in Portage, IN shared a great idea:

"Most of our guests have the 'keychain' goggles or they have their see-through bag (that we sell) in which they carry their lotion and eyewear, so they just hold it up to show us they have it. I used to manage a large chain facility and was trained to always ask

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Melissa Laribee, Colchester, CT

to see a guest's eye protection. We were told that if a 'secret tanner' came in and saw us send someone to a tanning room without eye protection, the store would be fined \$1,000 and the employee would have to cover some of the fine! This made me always want to check guests' eyewear because I didn't want that coming out of MY paycheck. I explained this to the tanners and they wouldn't want to pay that fine either – they simply have their eyewear ready to show whenever they come to tan."

Lezlie King of Pura Vita Day Spa in Conroe, TX practices good listening skills:

"I listen to a guest who is expressing displeasure about the policy without interrupting and respond with, 'I really do understand your point of view and your perspective. Unfortunately, I am bound to follow the rules of the state, the industry and our business as it relates to consumer safety and the fiduciary responsibility of my company and our employees. If I did not do my due diligence as a business owner, we could lose our license or at a minimum, have to increase our prices to cover higher insurance premiums and possible fines. I trust you understand our position and know that we value your business and our employees' livelihoods. Help us comply and certainly, what you do once you are in the privacy of the tanning room is your own life choice. We appreciate you!'"

So, how do you handle this common situation? Email Brenda@WinkEase.com with the code: IST No Eyewear. ■



About the Author:

Tanning industry veteran Brenda Fishbaugh is president of Eye Pro, Inc., makers of disposable eyewear. She travels extensively training salons on

the effects of UV light on vision.

