

## National Youth Safety Essay Scholarship Contest Winner

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When I began the OSHA 10-hour program I did not think I would get much use out of it, but now almost every day, I realize the things I learned from the OSHA program. This challenging course has had a great impact on my daily life. Holding the OSHA 10-hour wallet card is a credential that makes me stand out above others. The OSHA wallet card is an excellent addition to any type of resume in the workforce. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration course was provided to me by my career tech cosmetology school. Here, we were to learn not only the safety precautions for a salon environment, but for any type of work environment. Taking the OSHA course may have seemed like a regular class assignment, but has become much more of a great resource to have.

Within a salon, there are many safety hazards to be aware of including chemical liquid handling, ergonomics, electrical use and bloodborne pathogens. By using what I have learned from OSHA, I am able to accurately identify exactly what is in the chemical bottles for certain products, along with the ingredients and safety precautions for the cleaning chemicals stored in a salon. It is always best to know what exactly is being used and how to use it. This is why I have a much better understanding of what is to be used when and exactly how.

When working in a salon, there is always room for improvements to create better ergonomics, which I have improved my setup and safety after learning the information from OSHA. While you always want a client to be comfortable and avoid injury, it is just as important to be cautious of the comfort of the cosmetologist in the salon. OSHA has shown me that the smallest changes can have the biggest impacts. This has led me to be more cautious with my set up. The way a client's chair is setup can affect the client, but also the cosmetologist's proper health. If a cosmetologist has to lean over frequently and be in uncomfortable positions for periods of time, it can negatively affect the cosmetologist's health permanently. A real life situation occurred one day while I was shampooing a client during my internship. The shampoo bowl was too high up and I had to continuously lean and be in an awkward uncomfortable position.

Knowing the OSHA aspect of proper ergonomics, I was able to ask the salon owner to rearrange the setup to protect my health. Setup was never something that seemed very important to me, but after taking the OSHA course I realize it is actually one of the most important safety factors.

Some of the main hair services include instruments being used that are electric. Improper electrical use has such a high risk of incidents. One day at the salon, I noticed another cosmetologist's curling iron only halfway plugged into the outlet with the cord hanging on the floor. Having the OSHA training knowledge, I knew the risk of this setup. I went to the cosmetologist and helped fix the setup to prevent any negative situation from happening.

Although it may not seem like any bloodborne pathogens can occur in a salon, it is very common during a manicure, pedicure or haircutting service. Having a bloodborne incident can be very serious. Being OSHA certified has given me helpful information on responses and procedures to follow if an incident were to occur.

I work in a wholesale grocery store. Here I am lifting boxes onto high shelves, using rolling ladder carts, and operating cleaning machines. A few months after I earned my OSHA credential, coincidentally my managers began to post OSHA signs throughout the work areas. This enabled me and the employees to begin taking more precautions and learn proper safety for the store. Having already completed the OSHA 10-hour course, I had an advantage ahead and was able to help my coworkers have a better understanding. Working together, we were able to make the workplace safer more efficiently.

The OSHA training has changed my outlook in so many different ways. There was so much I thought I would never use after completing the course. Dangerous events happen commonly all over a workplace due to employees not having the proper training to take caution to its fullest. Now that I know the benefits of having the proper training, I would highly recommend the OSHA course to anyone regardless if they're in the workforce or just looking to have proper knowledge on safety training. Even a year later after completing the 10-hour course, I still notice small things and think to myself, "OSHA credentialed!"