



# *PROTECTING YOUR HEALTH & PROSPERITY HOW TO PROTECT YOUR RESPIRATORY HEALTH AS A LASH ARTIST*

BY JEFF CARDARELLA

As many of you know, concerns regarding the respiratory health of nail technicians and hair stylists have been on the rise. With the introduction of the hottest hair treatment or funkier nail art, an invisible, and often unwelcome addition is added to the air we breathe. You've heard the letters before, "V-O-C".

VOC stands for volatile organic compound. Many products in the beauty industry, be it keratin smoothing treatments, or nail polishes, contain these compounds that can easily evaporate into the atmosphere and ultimately enter our bodies through our respiratory system.

I know what you're thinking though, "I don't do hair or nails. I'm a lash artist, so I don't have to worry". This is not necessarily true...

The cyanoacrylate glue used in eyelash extensions contains the very same VOC's found in nail and hair products, and is easily evaporated and released into the air.

*According to Doug Schoon, a leading cosmetic scientist, "Vapors from eyelash adhesives can be irritating to the eye, nose and throat, but this is easily avoided. Irritation occurs when cyanoacrylate monomer vapors concentrations become*

*too high, so it makes sense to lower exposure. Reduce the concentrations of these vapors and you'll reduce problems."*

But how can we lower exposure to vapors created by eyelash adhesives? It's easy, but first we must understand the concept of the "breathing zone".

Think of the breathing zone as a beach ball sized sphere that surrounds our head from which we take every breath. When lash artists are working their magic, vapors from the adhesive is released into the breathing zone and inhaled.

Ok, so now that we know what the breathing zone is, what can we do to lower the exposure to cyanoacrylate vapors?

*According to Mr. Schoon, there are a few ways:*

- "1. Use the correct amount of adhesive. Many use too much- less is best!*
- 2. Wear magnifying eye wear so you can work further from the client's eyes. The closer you work, the higher the*

*concentration of monomer vapors in your breathing zone. Also, avoiding hunching over the eyes will save your back and neck from injury.*

*3. Use source capture ventilation to remove monomer vapors from your breathing zone. This is a highly effective way to ensure good quality breathing air, and to eliminate irritation". (Doug Schoon)*

Good advice, no?

To help reduce exposure to VOCs, let's focus on the most effective method: using a *source capture ventilation system*.

Wait a minute, *a source-what-now?*

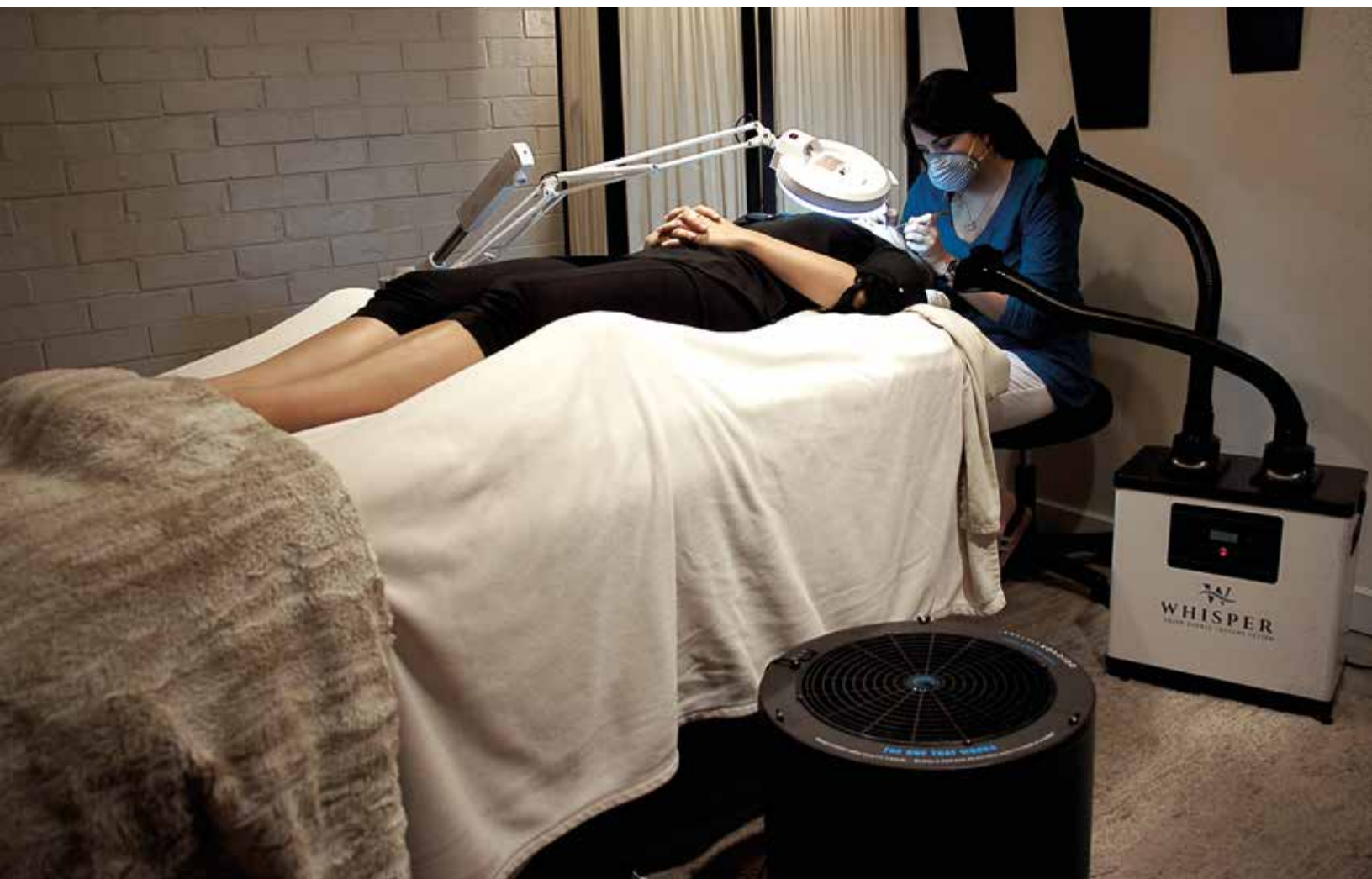
A simple way of thinking of a source capture ventilation system is comparing it to a regular, run-of-the-mill air purifier, but instead of being designed for home use, this system is designed specially to remove vapors and dust from the breathing zones of workers in the beauty industry.

By using 1 or 2 positional extraction arms, a source capture system sucks out the harmful vapors from the breathing zone before they can be inhaled. The pollutants are then pulled through a multi-stage system that uses high grade activated carbon and HEPA filtration to trap the contaminants and return clean, purified air to the salon space.

A common misconception in the beauty industry, especially in nail salons, is that a mask worn over the face will protect the breathing zone from vapors or fumes. This is not the case! Many times, the masks used are designed to keep contaminants from transferring from the person wearing the mask to a second party and are not rated for preventing the inhalation of microscopic dusts or VOCs.

There are masks on the market that are rated at a higher threshold for particulate matter and contain a small amount of activated carbon for absorption of VOCs, but they are commonly overlooked. This type of mask is a good start, but a more effective and permanent solution is the use of a source capture system.

Source capture systems are available on the market that are highly effective, very low noise and have a very small footprint, thereby maintaining the aesthetics and tranquil environment of your lash studio.





*Ok, now that we know how to best protect the breathing zone by using a source capture ventilation system, let's move on to the next "zone" in your salon or studio. Let's call this the "room zone".*

While source capture ventilation is highly effective at removing vapors at their source, there will always be factors that prevent it from being 100 percent effective. Some of these factors include cross-drafts in the salon caused by people entering and exiting the building, movement of the lash artist or client, even your HVAC system cycling on or off.

This secondary zone in your space, or "room zone" can be infiltrated by VOC's that the source capture system does not catch. These migratory vapors can prove irritating to other

people in the salon, and even harmful to salon workers that are exposed to them at a higher rate due to the time they spend at work.

This "room zone" should be protected with a room air purifier that is designed specifically for salons, not one that is for home use. A unit that provides a recirculating airflow pattern, or "fountain-flow" of air that takes in contaminated air, pulls it through a filter and at least 8 pounds of high-grade activated carbon, thereby removing migratory VOCs, is a highly effective method of solving the problem of migratory vapors in the room space.

So that's it in a nut shell! By taking the steps of reducing exposure to VOC's in your breathing zone and room zone by implementing proper ventilation control measures, lash artists can protect the respiratory health of themselves and their clientele, and use this advantage to build their client base by offering their services in the safest, most healthy way.

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*You can follow his blog at:  
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