



*Following the news that the Hochul administration is delaying implementation of a ventilation standard designed to keep frontline nail salon workers safe from inhaling toxic chemicals, the Steering Committee for the New York Healthy Nail Salons Coalition — which includes NYCOSH, Adhikaar and Workers United NY NJ Regional Joint Board — released the following statement. Nail salon workers face [significant short- and long-term risks](#) from constant exposure to toxic chemicals:*

“Every single nail salon technician in New York, regardless of their race or where they work, deserves to have a safe and healthy working environment, free from unnecessary exposure to toxic chemicals. But right now, our state’s nail salon techs, who are overwhelmingly AAPI and Latina, put themselves at risk every day they show up for work. Without proper ventilation where they work, nail techs are at an increased risk for serious health issues like miscarriages, cancer and asthma.

“In response to New York nail salon workers’ heroic organizing for better conditions, the state of New York concluded that new ventilation standards were required in order to protect workers. That was half a decade ago. Our state’s nail technicians cannot afford to wait any longer for basic measures to protect themselves from toxic chemicals.

“Nail salons have had over five years to comply with this standard and are now using the pandemic as an excuse to skirt compliance of a requirement that they have long had notice of. But the COVID-19 pandemic doesn’t justify further delay — it only exacerbates the need for urgent action, particularly with everything we have learned about the importance of ventilation during the pandemic. By agreeing to delay these standards yet again, New York State is failing to protect workers’ health and safety, and it speaks volumes about how our government chooses to treat a workforce that is mostly immigrant women of color.

“It is unacceptable that the Department of State and the Hochul Administration did not consult with workers before making this misguided decision. It is unethical and unjust that New York State is rolling back labor protections that workers have already fought for and won. The actions of the Hochul administration only underscore the urgency for lawmakers to pass the Nail Salon Minimum Standards Council Act, which will give nail salon workers a formal voice on the job to pass baseline standards and fair pricing rules that will finally put a stop to the nail salon industry’s race to the bottom.”

“It’s very concerning to hear that the government made this decision without even consulting us as workers,” said Goma Yonjan Gurung, nail salon technician for 25 years and Adhikaar member leader. “We have been holding our breath, waiting for ventilation at salons for years now, and with the first extension, we thought that was all. But with the additional extension today it makes me wonder when will we ever get the health protections we need? Salons are opening up, the summer is coming and we know that it is about to get busy. This is what happens when we are not given a seat at the table - changes happen in our industry that we did not ask for.”

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*Founded in 2014 by Adhikaar and the New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health (NYCOSH), and joined by Workers United NY NJ Regional Joint Board in 2015, the NY Healthy Nail Salons Coalition was formed around the central idea that nail salon workers deserve just jobs: healthy workplaces with living wages and a voice in their working conditions.*

*The Coalition includes workers, community, occupational health, consumer, and public interest law organizations to combat wage theft, health and safety violations, and other abuses in the nail salon industry. Since its founding, the coalition won the nation's first Nail Salon Workers' Bill of Rights in 2015, and successfully advocated to eliminate the tipped subminimum wage for nail salon workers in 2019. For more information, visit <https://nyhealthynails.org/>.*