



Natural Hair Care Specialist State Board Cheat Sheet

1. Sanitation & Safety

- **Handwashing:** Wash hands before and after each client with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
- **Disinfection:** Use EPA-registered disinfectants for tools and surfaces.
- **Implements:** Clean, disinfect, and store in closed containers.
- **Single-use items:** Dispose of after each client (e.g., gloves, neck strips).
- **Work area:** Keep clean, organized, and free of debris.
- **Personal protective equipment (PPE):** Gloves, masks, and aprons as needed.
- **Blood exposure:** Stop service, put on gloves, clean area with antiseptic, cover wound, disinfect tools, and dispose of contaminated materials properly.

2. Client Consultation

- **Intake form:** Record client's name, contact info, allergies, scalp conditions, and previous chemical treatments.
- **Scalp analysis:** Check for abrasions, infections, or disorders before service.
- **Contraindications:** Do not perform service if scalp is irritated, infected, or has open sores.
- **Service plan:** Discuss desired style, maintenance, and aftercare.

3. Hair & Scalp Anatomy

- **Hair structure:**
 - Cuticle – outer protective layer
 - Cortex – strength, elasticity, pigment
 - Medulla – inner core (may be absent in fine hair)
- **Hair growth cycle:**
 - Anagen – growth phase
 - Catagen – transition phase
 - Telogen – resting/shedding phase
- **Scalp conditions:**
 - Dandruff (pityriasis)
 - Seborrhea (excess oil)
 - Alopecia (hair loss)
 - Folliculitis (inflammation of follicles)

4. Tools & Equipment

- **Combs & brushes:** Detangling, parting, smoothing
- **Clips:** Sectioning hair
- **Dryers:** Hooded, handheld, or diffusers
- **Steamers:** Add moisture and improve product absorption
- **Implements:** Shears, razors, tweezers (for trimming or shaping)
- **Sanitation:** Clean and disinfect after each use

5. Natural Hair Services

Shampooing & Conditioning

- Use sulfate-free cleansers for natural hair.
- Massage scalp gently to stimulate circulation.
- Rinse thoroughly and apply conditioner from mid-shaft to ends.
- Detangle with wide-tooth comb while conditioner is in hair.

Blow-Drying

- Towel blot excess water.
- Apply heat protectant.
- Use medium heat and tension method or comb attachment.

Twists, Braids, and Locs

- **Two-strand twists:** Divide hair into sections, twist two strands around each other.
- **Braids (plaits):** Divide into three strands and cross alternately.
- **Cornrows:** Braid close to scalp using underhand technique.
- **Locs:** Coil, palm roll, or interlock to form and maintain.
- **Maintenance:** Cleanse regularly, moisturize, and retwist as needed.

Extensions

- **Preparation:** Clean and dry natural hair.
- **Attachment methods:** Braiding, twisting, crochet, or sewing.
- **Removal:** Gently detangle and cleanse scalp afterward.

6. Product Knowledge

- **Moisturizers:** Water-based products for hydration.
- **Sealants:** Oils and butters to lock in moisture.
- **Styling products:** Gels, creams, and mousses for hold and definition.
- **pH balance:** Hair and scalp prefer slightly acidic (4.5–5.5).
- **Avoid:** Heavy silicones, sulfates, and alcohols that cause dryness.

7. Professional Conduct

- **Licensing:** Display current license visibly.
- **Record keeping:** Maintain client records and service history.

- **Communication:** Be professional, courteous, and clear.
- **Confidentiality:** Protect client information.
- **Continuing education:** Stay updated on techniques and safety standards.

8. State Board Practical Exam Tips

- Label all containers clearly.
- Sanitize hands and workstation before and after each procedure.
- Follow infection control protocols exactly.
- Perform each step methodically and confidently.
- Dispose of waste properly.
- Maintain professional demeanor throughout the exam.

9. Common Disorders & Conditions

Condition	Description	Recommendation
Alopecia Areata	Patchy hair loss	Refer to dermatologist
Tinea Capitis	Fungal infection	Do not perform service
Seborrheic Dermatitis	Flaky, oily scalp	Use medicated shampoo
Psoriasis	Thick, scaly patches	Avoid irritation, refer to physician
Traction Alopecia	Hair loss from tension	Reduce tight styles

10. Key Terms

- **Porosity:** Hair’s ability to absorb moisture.
- **Elasticity:** Hair’s ability to stretch and return to normal.
- **Density:** Number of hair strands per square inch.
- **Texture:** Thickness or diameter of individual strands.
- **pH:** Potential hydrogen; affects hair’s condition and product performance.

Study Focus: Sanitation, client safety, anatomy, and proper technique execution are the most heavily weighted areas on the state board exam.