

Dear Jill

Easing the Pain of the Model Victim

Dear Jill,

I'm a model who has had it with rough hairdressers, makeup artists with unsanitary kits, clients who treat us like pieces of meat, and stylists who prick and prod. How about a few reminders about creating a pleasant and professional working environment?

—abused models activist
new york, new york

Dear Abused,

If only these occupations required licenses, and certain violations—such as a complete disregard for safety-in-pinning—would result in points on the license, eventual suspension, and possible revocation. Transgressors could opt for comedy styling/makeup/hair school to remove points and learn to proceed cautiously.

Here is what each group would learn:

Hairdressers:

1. Do not brush hair like your Joan Crawford in *Mommy Dearest*.
2. When straightening or curling hair, keep the heat considerably cooler than the flames of Hell, and do not continue if you notice any smoking, sizzling, shrieking, or burning skin.
3. If an up-do is stretching the skin on the model's face to Cher-like tautness, it's too tight. No matter how pretty her hair may be, a model with a migraine is useless.
4. Unless you are shooting in the eye of a hurricane, use hair spray with the intent of keeping the hair in place—not turning it into a sculpture or motorcycle helmet.
5. Wrap up the day by giving the models intense neck and scalp massages; they'll forgive you for any pain you may have inflicted earlier.

Makeup Artists:

1. Smokers—wash your hands! Non-smokers—wash your hands. Smokers—wash your hands again, because they still stink like a pile of cigarette butts in a urine-stained corner next to an overflowing garbage can in a Greyhound bus station.
2. Clean your kits and brushes! Do not use the same crusty sponge and sweaty powder puff on 200 girls—or even 2 girls. And that lip brush—

geez—with Model Candy sleeping with Client Klaus, you don't know where those smackers have been.

3. Don't pull the old "I'm just going to clean up your brows a bit" routine. Say it like it is: "Sorry, brace yourself, I just have to tweeze 237 hairs from you brows now," or, better yet, "Hold tight, honey, I'm going to remove your eyebrows now."

4. Don't blame your incompetence on the models' "facial flaws." Have you seen some of those supermodels without makeup? Either learn how to turn any strung-out, jet-lagged, edgy (i.e. ugly) girl into a stunner, or go back to the makeup counter. (Or learn the magic words of the millennium: computer re-touching.)

5. Gentle facial massages and soothing moisturizer work wonders on morning moody models.

Stylists:

1. Models are not voodoo dolls.
2. Zipping up a model's skin will leave her scarred—mentally and physically—for the remainder of her career, maybe longer, and you shall lose your sense of style, due to the bad karma, and live out

the rest of your days selling retail at Lerner's.

3. Disinfect those earring posts; at least clean off all the ear casserole crud which has been accumulating on them since 1983.

4. Hot, humid day. New model. New panty hose.

5. A mid-day shoulder massage will improve the model's posture and make the clothes look better.

Clients:

1. Relax and let everyone do his/her job.
2. Arrange for an epicurean feast with vegetarian options and lots of refreshments.
3. Don't overwork anyone.
4. Don't underpay anyone.
5. Massages may be taken the wrong way; keep your hands off.

Models, remember, the people above could fill a complaint box the size of Naomi Campbell's closet about you. Be nice and let the bottom line of your voucher determine how much you will endure quietly.

—jill johnson

