



BUSINESS, CONSUMER SERVICES, AND HOUSING AGENCY – GOVERNOR Edmund G. Brown JR.

BOARD OF BARBERING AND COSMETOLOGY

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Industry Bulletin – 3/10/15 – Electrical Muscle Stimulators

Electronic muscle stimulator (EMS) devices supply electrical energy to the body surface through plates, pads, or other attachments and cause contraction of the muscles. Only licensed medical practitioners may use EMS devices to stimulate and contract the muscles to relax a muscle spasm, prevent tissue atrophy, increase local blood circulation, or for other purposes. Use of these devices by cosmetologists, estheticians, or other nonmedical individuals for body-toning, muscle firming or tightening, passive exercise, reducing or eliminating cellulite, reducing girth, and for similar purposes is considered misbranded use by the Federal government.

EMS devices have a great potential for harm if used improperly. The devices can aggravate existing medical conditions such as cancer, heart and circulatory diseases, and epilepsy and may produce adverse reactions requiring immediate medical assistance.

To find out if a device is intended to contract the muscles, ask the manufacturer or representative and check the manufacturer's brochure. Beware of devices that advertise "passive exercise," "slimming," "cellulite removal," etc. These are services, by their very nature and title would require muscle contraction to produce the advertised result. Ask the representative to demonstrate the device for you. A muscle contraction can be seen with the naked eye—the muscle "jumps" when the current causes it to visibly shorten and thicken.

The Board of Barbering and Cosmetology (Board) does not approve or regulate equipment or products used in the barbering and beauty industry. Consequently, the Board provides no opinion on the contemplated use of any machine a licensee is considering purchasing.

Be aware that the Food and Drug Administration has published "Import Alert 89-01" regarding EMS devices.

http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/cms_ia/importalert_240.html

Please also see pages 25-26 of the Board's Consumer Guide to Barbering and Cosmetology services:

http://www.barbercosmo.ca.gov/forms_pubs/publications/consumer_guide.pdf