

Oh, The Stories Tanners Tell!

By Brenda Fishbaugh

I've been in the indoor tanning industry for 25 years pushing the importance of wearing eye protection. I thought I'd heard all the excuses tanners use to not wear it ... but a few of these were even new to me!

Dana Branson, district manager of The Tan Company in Columbia, MO, had a guest tell her that she didn't need eyewear because she smoked so much weed. "I told her, 'Ma'am, that's glaucoma, not cataracts,'" Dana laughs.

Kelly Priebe, of Sun Spa UV & Spray-Tanning Studio of Owen Sound, Ontario, Canada, had a tanner tell her after her session that she forgot her goggles, and decided to put a sock over her eyes instead of hollering for Kelly to bring her some. But Kelly doubts the tanner was able to use even a completely inadequate sock, as she had tanned in a *stand-up!*

Here are some of the ways salon owners combat the crazy excuses tanners used.

Crystal Martin, of Sun Spot Atlantis in Colorado Springs, CO offers a once-a-year goggle exchange. Tanners give her their old pair and get \$2 off a new pair. "They will use the same pair for YEARS if we don't educate them about the need to swap out their goggles, just like a toothbrush," Crystal says.

Perhaps you've heard of the excuse that Louise Small of California Sun Tanporiums in Bear, DE hears most often. "My guests tell me that they don't need eyewear because they put a towel over their face while tanning. I explain that a towel is has SPF of only 5 - it doesn't protect their face or their eyes. I suggest they purchase a total UV-blocking cloth face protector, and wear eye protection under it," she says.

"When I ask to see their eye protection, tanners often show me their sunglasses," says Rhonda Bollinger of Special Touch Tanning in Kettering, OH. "I explain that sunglasses will create HUGE tan lines around their eyes, and that sunglasses allow ambient light to come in around the sides. They'll be much happier with FDA-compliant eye protection - I suggest they move it around a bit during the session to avoid tan lines around the eye. Alternating types of eyewear can be helpful, too."

"I use a flashlight to educate tanners," says Lisa Duke of Time Out Too, in Essexville, MI. We all know how we can see a flashlight shined through our hand. "I explain that if a little flashlight can penetrate their hand, what happens to their thin eyelids when they use a sunbed with facial tanners? That does the trick - they purchase eye protection!" Lisa says.

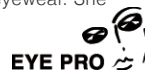
Robert Ashe of Sun Seekers in Portsmouth, NH, has a sobering story. "I had a guest refuse to wear eye protection. We actually had an argument about it. She finally agreed to do it, and I let her tan. They next day, she came in and told me her eyes hurt from not wearing eyewear and that I needed to pay for her eye doctor appointment and treatment. My insurance company became involved. Now, I'm even more vigilant about it: If you don't wear eyewear, you don't tan at my salon!"

These salon pros have found ways to get the word out about eye protection - have you? ■



About the Author:

Tanning industry veteran Brenda Fishbaugh is president of Eye Pro, Inc., makers of disposable eyewear. She travels extensively training salons on the effects of UV light on vision.



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