



**PROGRAM**  
Cosmetology

**Interpretive Statement- COS1**

SUBJECT	
Regulation of Natural Hair Braiding	
CONTACT PERSON	REFERENCES
Trudie Touchette Administrator, Professional Licensing Support	
EFFECTIVE DATE	
January 24, 2005	
APPROVAL	

**Does the law relating to Cosmetologists, Barbers, Manicurists, and Estheticians, RCW 18.16 regulate natural hair braiders?**

RCW 18.16 recognizes that the professions of cosmetology, barbers, manicurists and estheticians involves the use of tools and chemicals which may be dangerous when mixed and applied improperly and therefore finds it necessary to regulate those professions in order to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public. However, neither RCW 18.16 or WAC 308-20 specifically identifies or defines natural hair braiding as requiring licensure” and is not specifically referred to in any other section of the law.

The Department of Licensing has carefully considered the practice of natural hair braiding. Natural hair braiding does not include hair cutting, application of dyes, reactive chemicals or other preparations to alter the color of the hair or to straighten, curl or alter the structure of the hair and therefore does not meet the requirements for licensure as set forth in RCW.18.16.