



Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation

Division of Professional Regulation

PAT QUINN
Governor

MICHAEL T. McRAITH
Acting Secretary
DANIEL E. BLUTHARDT
Division Director

Statement Regarding Fish Pedicures

The Department has received a number of inquiries about a procedure referred to as “fish pedicure” or “fish therapy.” While the Department does not issue “advisory opinions” or dispense legal advice, the public’s interest in this subject merits this statement from the Department. Parties seeking a legal opinion should consult with their own attorney.

Fish pedicuring involves the placement of a client’s feet (or less often the hands) in a footbath, basin, or tub of water containing tiny fish that eat away the dead skin cells and otherwise cleanse and exfoliate the skin for cosmetic or beautifying purposes.

Exfoliating, cleansing and other procedures done for cosmetic or beautifying purposes fall within the Barber, Cosmetology, Esthetics, and Nail Technology Act, 225 ILCS 410. The Act requires that these procedures be performed only by a licensed cosmetologist or esthetician, with the exception of licensed medical personnel.

The Illinois Administrative Code requires that cosmetology procedures comply with certain sanitary standards. These standards can be found [here](#). Sanitizing the fish in accordance with the Code’s sanitary standards would certainly kill them. Therefore, it appears to be impossible to perform fish pedicures that comply with the Code’s sanitary standards.