

Scent Safety in the Workplace



Policy

To ensure the health and well-being of employees against environmental chemical sensitivities all employees, customers and visitors are to refrain from using scented products throughout WorkSafeBC facilities.

In considering the health needs and concerns of those sensitive and non-sensitive employees alike and to provide a healthy working environment for every employee, this policy will take effect on December 1, 2006.

Purpose

The goals of this policy are to:

- **Eliminate** the use of perfume, cologne/aftershave, scented air fresheners, scented candles and potpourri from the workplace;
- **Reduce** the use of heavily scented personal hygiene products such as hair products, lotions/creams and deodorant;
- **Reduce** heavily scented flowers in the workplace such as Lilacs, Hyacinth, Flowering broom etc.

General Information

Scented products may provoke symptoms in sensitive individuals. In sufficient concentrations scented products may trigger responses to those with allergies or sensitivities to certain substances.

Scented products fall into two main categories:

Personal Products

Hygiene: Products include cosmetics, perfumes, colognes, after-shave and scented shaving creams, deodorant, shampoo/conditions, hair spray, lotions and creams.

Non Hygiene: Products include scented candles, potpourri and scented ornaments.

Non personal products

Products with a distinct scent or fragrance and include scented household, industrial cleaning products, building materials, air fresheners, and some types of flowers.

Scented products can cause a variety of symptoms such as, but not limited to sore throat; runny nose; sinus congestion; wheezing; shortness of breath; headaches. Strongly scented products have been associated with migraines.

Responsibilities

Senior Management

- Support managers, staff and Joint Health and Safety Committees in implementing the scent reduction workplace policy.

Managers/Supervisors

- Educate staff in the use and effects of scented products.
- Ensure products used by staff are fragrance free, when possible.
- Enforce the policy and procedures.

Employees

- Comply with the policy and procedures regarding scented products.
- Submit any inquiries to the Safety mailbox.

Joint Health and Safety Committees

- Promote staff education in the use and effects of scented products

Safety, Health & Wellness

- Develop policy.
- Develop educational materials.
- Assist in educating staff in the use and effects of scented products.

Facilities

- Use products and ensure contractors use products that are scent free, when possible
- Notify appropriate personnel when work is to take place that may involve the use of scented products, or products that contain an odor that may affect the health of staff. Notification should allow a reasonable time frame for staff accommodation to take place, if necessary.

Materials

- Safety Meeting Presentation – *Scent Safety In Our Workplace*
- WSN Site – *Scent Safety*

References

- Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (www.ccohs.ca)
- British Columbia Lung Association (www.bc.lung.ca)
- Canadian Health Network (www.canadian-health-network.ca)
- Dalhousie University (<http://scentfree.dal.ca/guide.shtml>)
- Guide to Less Toxic Products (www.lesstoxicguide.ca)