

SCENTED PRODUCTS IN THE WORKPLACE – (guidelines)

PURPOSE

- Guidelines aim to raise awareness about sensitivities to scents in the workplace and provide recommendations on approaches that can be used to deal with this issue.

POLICY

- Due to the health concerns arising from exposure to scented products, the Infection Control Committee (ICC) has instituted guidelines to increase awareness and sensitivity to a scent-free environment for all employees and visits.
- The goal is to inform all employees of the health concerns related to scents, why the guidelines are needed and to use scent free products.
- The Infection Control Committee (ICC) encourages its employees, clients and volunteers to be considerate of individuals, both co-workers and clients, who may have sensitivities to scented products.
- The use of scented products will be discouraged within the worksite buildings, on individuals and vehicles. In place of scented products, all employees are encouraged to use scent-free products. In addition, there should be attempts made for all materials used for cleaning to be scent-free.

DEFINITIONS

- **What is meant by "scent-free"?** When we talk about "scents", we usually mean the smells or odors from cosmetics (perfume, make-up, shampoo, deodorant, etc) or from other products such as air fresheners, cleaners, etc. Scents are included in a very large range of products including:
 - shampoo and conditioners
 - hairsprays
 - deodorants
 - colognes and aftershaves
 - fragrances and perfumes
 - lotions and creams
 - potpourri
 - industrial and household chemical
 - soaps and cosmetics
 - air fresheners and deodorizers
 - oils and candles
 - diapers and some types of garbage bags

- Employees shall refrain from using or wearing scented products while in the workplace when they are in contact with employees or clients with sensitivities to scented products.
- Employees should discuss concerns with individual(s) who use the scented products separately and privately. The aim of the discussion is to foster mutual respect for an employee who has a genuine concern or issue with scents in the workplace. It may be appropriate to have the discussion without disclosing the concerned individual if possible.

PROCEDURE(S)

There are no separate procedures for this policy.

REFERENCES and NOTES

Rationale: Many people report sensitivities to various chemical-based or scented products. In response to health concerns, the ICC has developed some Scent-Free Guidelines. Scented products such as hair spray, perfume, and deodorant can trigger reactions such as respiratory distress and headaches. We ask for everyone's cooperation in our efforts to accommodate a healthy environment for employees, clients and visitors.

Can scents cause health problems? When scented products have been blamed for adversely affecting a person's health, some or all of the following symptoms are reported:

- headaches
- dizziness, lightheadedness
- nausea
- fatigue
- weakness
- insomnia
- malaise
- confusion
- loss of appetite
- depression
- anxiety
- numbness
- upper respiratory symptoms
- shortness of breath
- difficulty with concentration
- skin irritation

Allergic and asthmatic patients, as well as those with other conditions, report that certain odors, even in the smallest amounts, can trigger an attack.

EXHIBITS

(none)