



**TOWARDS A SCENT CONSIDERATE
SCHOOL/ WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT**

Context

Chemical sensitivity, caused by chemically scented products, including essential oils can cause serious disabling conditions. WorkSafe BC and other similar organizations in other provinces have recognized the severity of this condition as a workplace hazard.

Policy Statement

The Board recognizes that health concerns may arise from exposure to scented products. In order to ensure the health and well-being of students and employees limit their use of scented products when attending school district facilities or events.

Guidelines

The Board Expects:

1. All staff, students, and community members to be scent aware and considerate of others.
2. That scented products will be used in moderation and only as necessary for the health and safety of our school communities.
3. That respectful action to reduce the use of scented products, especially Petro-chemically based scents, will occur.

Definitions

Scented Product Categories

a. Personal Products

- i. Hygiene:* Products include, but are not limited to, cosmetics, perfumes, colognes, after-shave and scented shaving creams, deodorant, shampoo/conditioners, hair spray, lotions and creams.
- ii. Non Hygiene:* Products include, but are not limited to, scented candles, potpourri and scented ornaments.

b. Non Personal Products

Products with a distinct scent or fragrance and include scented household/ industrial cleaning products, air fresheners, deodorizers, building materials (e.g. paint) and some types of flowers.

References

- [WorkSafe BC HEA1-9 Scent Safety in the Workplace](#)

Dates of Adoption/Amendments

Adopted: 2003.05.27

Amended: 2007.05.22: 2016.12.13: **2022.06.28**



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Purpose

These Administrative Procedures are intended to increase the awareness within the schools about the potential impact of fragrance chemicals on the health, wellbeing, productivity and lifestyle of those affected, as per Policy 803: Towards and Scent Considerate School/Workplace Environment.

Expectations

- Be considerate of those who are sensitive to fragrance chemicals. Avoid using chemically-scented products; instead, use unscented alternatives.
- If you do use chemically-scented products, use them sparingly. A general guideline for chemically-scented products is that the scent should not be detectable more than an arm's length away from you. Do not apply scented products in a public area.
- Be an informed customer. Read the product label. A product labeled as "fragrance-free" is likely to be free of fragrance chemicals. A product labeled as "scent-free" or "unscented" may mean that no fragrance chemicals have been added to the product, or it may be that a masking agent has been added to disguise the smell of some of the ingredients. These terms are not regulated, so use your nose or ask the store to check the product for fragrances.
- Avoid using products (e.g. air fresheners or potpourris) that give off chemical-based scents in your work area.
- Avoid using laundry products or cleaning agents that are chemically-scented. Air out dry-cleaned clothing before wearing.

If an individual is adversely affected by chemically-scented products:

- If you feel you can do so comfortably, approach the scented individual and let them know how you react to fragrances. Be specific about the types of physical reactions you have (e.g. asthma attacks, migraines, shortness of breath).
- Talk to the individual in a cordial and respectful manner. Ask for the individual's understanding and cooperation. Many people are unaware of the potential health effects of fragrance chemicals.
- Inform your Principal/ Vice Principal/Manager of your sensitivities, your symptoms, and the types of exposures that improve or worsen these symptoms. Ask your Principal/Vice Principal/Manager to assist in finding a solution to your situation. You may ask your Principal/Vice Principal/Manager to discuss this matter with the individual involved if you do not feel comfortable doing so, or if the individual has done nothing after you have advised them of your situation.
- Consult with your physician about your symptoms.

If an individual in your work area is adversely affected by chemically-scented products:

- Listen to the person with respect and civility.
- Clarify the issue. Ask the individual to describe the health effects, the factors that make the problem better or worse, and the actions they are taking to deal with it.
- Investigate the issue and use good judgment and consideration to provide a fair, uniform and timely resolution.



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- Discuss the issue with your staff in an open and non-threatening manner. Inform them of the health concerns that have arisen as a result of the use of chemically-scented products in the workplace. You may choose to have this discussion with an individual or a group of employees, whichever is appropriate to the situation.
- Request your staff's cooperation and understanding to voluntarily avoid the use of chemically-scented products in the area. Discuss the benefits of a scent-free work area.
- Implement measures to reasonably accommodate those who are affected by scented products. Where employees are severely limited due to exposure to scented products, you may need to establish a fragrance-free zone. For meetings held in enclosed rooms, you may need to send out notices to attendees informing them of the scent-free nature of the meeting.
- Consult with Operations staff regarding the adequacy of ventilation in the area.
- Distribute this information and display the "No Scents make Good Sense" poster.

What should you do if you are approached because of the scented product you are wearing?

- If an individual or your Principal/Vice Principal/Manager informs you that the fragranced products that you use or wear are a problem and requests that you avoid using them, you may feel puzzled, hurt, annoyed, defensive or even insulted by the request.
- Understand that it is not about you as a person or about your choice of fragrance, but it is about the chemicals in the fragranced product. Do not discount the issue as ridiculous and unreasonable.
- Discuss the issue openly. Ask questions about the health impact on the person, the types of symptoms experienced, the factors which make the person's symptoms better or worse (e.g. fragrance type, amount used).
- Empathize with the individual. Work with cooperation and understanding towards a satisfactory resolution.

References:

- [Board Policy 803: Towards a Scent Considerate School/Workplace Environment](#)
- [WorkSafeBC: Scent Safety in the Workplace](#)

Dates of Adoption/Amendments:

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