

	Scent Free Workplace	
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Service: Human Resources	Originating Date: 08-Feb-2008	
Section: Occupational Health and Safety		
Approved by: Senior Management Committee	Next Review Date: 08-Feb-2011	
Originator: Human Resources		
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Policy Statement

The David Thompson Health Region acknowledges its responsibility in providing a healthy environment for healthcare workers (HCWs), clients and the public. The use of scents and fragrant products shall be restricted. HCWs will refrain from the use of perfumed products or products where scent or other properties may cause health problems.

Inscope (unionized) Employees are governed by the terms and conditions of the relevant collective agreement(s). Should provisions of this policy conflict with the terms and conditions of the relevant collective agreement the collective agreement prevails.

1.0 Definitions

Health Care Worker (HCW) – All paid and unpaid persons working in healthcare facilities, including employees, physicians, volunteers, contract workers, and students.

Scents – the smells or odors from colognes and aftershaves, fragrances and perfumes, lotions and creams, shampoo and hair conditioners, hairsprays, deodorants, potpourri, industrial and household chemicals, soaps, cosmetics, air fresheners and deodorizers, oils, candles, diapers, some types of garbage bags, building material, upholstery fabrics, carpeting, combustion exhausts, dry-cleaning residue, newsprint and inked papers, cigarette smoke, various types of flowers i.e.) lilacs, babies breathe, lilies etc.

Fragrance Free/Scent Free – means that there have been no fragrances added to the cosmetic product, or that a masking agent has been added in order to hide the scents from the other ingredients in the product.

2.0 Background

Fragrances and scented products are everywhere in our society. Scents may cause or exacerbate health problems in some people. The severity of the symptoms can vary. Some people report mild irritation while others have more severe symptoms and must give up many normal activities.

3.0 General Principles

- 3.1 HCWs of the DTHR shall set the standard by not wearing scented personal care products.
- 3.2 Specific types of flowers with strong scents i.e.) lilacs, babies breathe, lilies etc. are discouraged and it is expected that any type of flowers with strong scents will be respectfully turned away. External florists and florists within the DTHR will be informed of this policy and encouraged to support the policy.
- 3.3 HCWs are expected to communicate this policy and provide explanation to other staff, visitors, patients, residents or clients who are using scented products or bringing in scented products and flowers to the workplace.
- 3.4 Anyone that may be identified, as a source of a scent, will be requested to refrain from the use of specific scented products and/or asked to substitute a personal care product with a scent-free product.
- 3.5 Each building in the DTHR will display appropriate information and signage to notify visitors and patients, residents and clients to refrain from wearing scented products and bringing in scented products including flowers to patients, residents or clients.
- 3.6 The region will maintain, as reasonably practicable, scent free buildings and work environments and eliminate the use of products where scent or other properties are known to cause health problems for, HCWs, patients, residents, clients, and visitors.
- 3.7 Any HCW with concerns about scents or other odours associated with products used while performing job duties should contact the immediate supervisor or manager to determine if there is an appropriate product substitution available.
- 3.8 Any HCW with concerns about potential symptoms caused by exposure to fragrances should be referred to Employee Health for evaluation.
- 3.9 Information regarding this policy will be provided to new employees upon hire.
- 3.10 Managers are responsible for ensuring employees comply with this policy. Non-compliance of the policy by employees may result in progressive discipline.

4.0 Exceptions to Scent-Free Restrictions

- 4.1 The region will need to make exceptions to this policy in order to effectively maintain or repair work sites and/or buildings, (e.g., painting, varnishing, floor stripping etc.). In these cases, every attempt will be made to utilize low odour paints and other materials.

- 4.2 To maintain a scent free environment, any HCW who is responsible for purchasing and receiving a product must ensure that the product does not emit strong vapours or odours; this may be done through evaluation of the MSDS's or product prior to purchasing.
- 4.3 If there are budgetary implications, senior maintenance personnel will advise the VP, Corporate Planning & Facility Support Services on proposed corrective action before proceeding.

5.0 Legislation

- 5.1 **This Policy is intended to meet or exceed any applicable Canadian and/ or Provincial legislation. In the event of a conflict between this Policy and the applicable Canadian and/or Provincial legislation, the legislation shall prevail.**

6.0 References:

- 6.1 Canada Health Network
- 6.2 Canadian Center of Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) - Scent Free Policy for the Workplace 8/2/2007