

*NS Depty Health Scent-free policy
Aug 2000*

interoffice
MEMORANDUM

To: All Staff
From: Phil Blandin, Occupational Health & Safety Consultant
Date: August 31, 2000
Subject: "Scent Free Policy"

Deputy Minister, Dr. Tom Ward, has signed a "Scent Free Policy" for the Department of Health, effective September 1, 2000.

This initiative further supports the Governments commitment to provide a safe and healthy workplace environment for all employees of the Department, as well as for visitors and clients.

Effective implementation of this Policy will only happen with your support and understanding to ensure those adversely affected by scented products have a scent free and safe workplace.

Attached is a copy of the "Scent Free Policy" for your review. If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact your immediate supervisor, or if necessary Phil Blandin (424-2005) or Shirley Stoodley (424-0966).

Phil Blandin
Occupational Health & Safety Consultant

PB/ss

Attachment

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

INDOOR AIR QUALITY: SCENT FREE POLICY

**PREPARED BY: THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH JOINT MASTER
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE**

JULY 2000

SUBJECT: INDOOR AIR QUALITY: SCENT FREE POLICY

1.0 DEFINITION

1.1 For the purpose of this policy, the term "scented product" means a product whose sole function is to be a perfume and/or a product which an odour has been added, and/or where the presence of the odour is necessary to the function of the product.

2.0 POLICY STATEMENT

2.1 It is recognized by the Department of Health that some employees and visitors have breathing problems, allergies, or environmental illnesses that are adversely affected by strong odours. Odours from scented products such as perfumes, aftershaves, hand creams, cleaning products and markers can cause these individuals to experience numerous health problems, such as difficulty in breathing, headaches, sinus congestion, dizziness, nausea, and fatigue. Reducing the number of scented products in the workplace will help reduce the potential health risk to individuals who experience health problems related to strong odours.

2.2 In areas where the Department has direct control over the choice of products (eg. In the purchasing of stationery products), the Department will choose non-toxic or low scent products whenever possible.

2.3 In areas where the Department has no control over the choice of products (eg. In the use of personal products by visitors to the Department), the Department will promote awareness about the hazards associated with scents.

3.0 POLICY OBJECTIVE

3.1 To reduce or wherever possible eliminate the number of scented products in areas where Department of Health employees work.

4.0 APPLICATION

4.1 This policy applies to all persons visiting and employed by the Department of Health. Whenever possible, visitors to the Department of Health workplaces should be given advance notice of the policy and asked to comply.

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5.0 POLICY DIRECTIVES

5.1 PRODUCTS

5.1.1 To reduce the number of scented products in the workplace, the Department of Health will:

5.1.2 Ensure that all stationery supplies are non-toxic, no or low scent whenever possible (eg. whiteboard markers);

5.1.3 Request that building cleaners use no or low scented, non-toxic products;

5.1.4 When it is not possible to use no or low scented products, ensure that Materials Safety Data Sheets identifying the chemical components of the scented products are posted for employee's information;

5.1.5 Initiate an employee awareness campaign to inform employees about the potential health hazards of scented personal products;

5.1.6 Prior to Department of Health sponsored meetings/events, request that participants refrain from wearing scented products;

5.1.7 Ensure that all replacement office equipment (eg. photocopiers and laser printers) have low or no scent emissions.

5.2 EMPLOYEES

5.2.1 Employees are asked to refrain from wearing or using scented personal products while at work, or prior to coming to work.

5.2.2 If an employee experiences a health hazard/physical reaction due to the use of a scented product in his or her proximity, he or she should discuss the problem with the person using the product as soon as is practical to do so. If for some reason the employee being adversely affected by a scented product is unable to initiate the discussion, or if the problem remains unresolved after such a discussion, the employee should report the problem to his or her supervisor. Complete an Occurrence Report Form.

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5.2 EMPLOYEES (CONTINUED)

5.2.3 Where the matter is not remedied to the employee's satisfaction, the employee should report the problem to his/her Divisional Manager or Director prior to addressing this matter before the Occupational Health & Safety Committee.

5.3 SUPERVISORS

5.3.1 If an employee reports experiencing a health hazard due to the use of a scented product in his or her proximity, the supervisor should immediately work toward identifying and removing the source of the scent.

5.3.2 If the supervisor requires assistance in identifying and removing the source of the scent, he or she should contact their manager or Director for remedy before bringing the matter before the Occupational Health & Safety Committee.

5.3.3 When the source of the scent is a personal product being worn or used by staff or another employee, the supervisor should direct that the employee refrain from wearing or using the product while at work, explaining that the product is causing a health problem for a co-worker. Request the offending employee to remove as much scent as is possible through washing.

5.4 OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE

5.4.1 When an employee or a supervisor, manager makes a complaint about scented products to the Occupational Health & Safety Committee, the Committee should treat the complaint in the same manner as any other complaint brought to the Committee's attention, following the process outlined in the Occupational Health & Safety Policy and Procedure Manual.

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6.0 ACCOUNTABILITY

6.1 EMPLOYEES

6.1.1 Employees upon hiring who experience a health hazard due to the use of a scented product, are accountable for reporting the problem to their immediate supervisor. If the employee is unable to resolve the issue themselves through discussion with the person using the product, or if the problem is not remedied to the satisfaction of the employee, the employee is accountable for reporting the problem to their Manager or Director first for resolution prior to submitting to the Occupational Health & Safety Committee

6.1.2 Employees responsible for organizing meetings and/or events involving people outside of the Department of Health are accountable for requesting that participants refrain from wearing scented products.

6.2 DIRECTORS/MANAGERS/SUPERVISORS

6.2.1 Directors, Managers, and Supervisors are accountable for finding and implementing as quickly as possible solutions to scent related problems that are contributing to a health problem for an employee.

6.2.2 The Directors, Managers, and Supervisors are accountable for follow-up with the employee or employees who were affected by the scent related problem to ensure that the implemented solution has remedied the problem.

6.2.3 If the Directors, Managers, and Supervisors are unable to implement a solution, the Director, Manager, and Supervisor are accountable for immediately reporting to subsequent levels of management as may be necessary to resolve the issue.

6.2.4 All Directors, Managers and Supervisors with authority to purchase as well as personnel placing purchase orders for new or replacement office equipment, furniture or other products for or on behalf of the Department of Health shall ensure where possible, that those products are no or low scent products. This policy and procedure shall be exercised by all DOH employees on a Regional, Divisional and sectional level.

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6.2 DIRECTORS/MANAGERS/SUPERVISORS (CONTINUED)

6.2.5 Where it is not possible to use scent free products and it is deemed an operational necessity to use a scented product, a Material Safety Data sheet (MSDS) will be posted for WHMIS controlled products or if an MSDS is not required (not a controlled product) a sign will be clearly posted indicating a scented product is in use. This sign will be posted as such to provide suitable warning to all persons who may be adversely affected by the scented product such as near elevators, stairwells, entrance to offices or work stations. A notice will also be posted on each Safety Information Board located in the building or near the affected work area warning that a scented product is in use in a specific area or on a specific floor of a building.

6.2.6 This no scent policy shall be communicated to all maintenance and cleaning staff in all buildings occupied by DOH employees.

6.2.7 The responsibility of communicating this Scent Free Policy will be the responsibility of the Directors, Managers, and Supervisors of the affected employees and includes all DOH locations.

6.2.8 Management responsible for staff at each location, will have a responsibility to periodically monitor the implementation and compliance of this Scent Free Policy.

6.3 OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE

6.3.1 In accordance with the Occupational Health & Safety Policy and Procedures Manual, the Occupational Health & Safety Committee is accountable for responding to any issues related to any scented products which has not been resolved by the supervisor or manager.

7.0 REFERENCES

7.0.1 Definition taken from Summary Report on Recommendations for the Regulations Under the Occupational Health & Safety Act of Nova Scotia: Indoor Air Quality Working Group: Document No. 1 (June 1995); Page 15, Section 8.8.

7.0.2 Department of Health Occupational Health & Safety Policy Procedure Manual, April 29, 2000.

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APPROVED BY:

DATE: _____
CHAIR, JOINT OCCUPATIONAL
HEALTH & SAFETY MASTER COMMITTEE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

DATE: _____
CONSULTANT
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

DATE: _____
DEPUTY MINISTER DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

EFFECTIVE DATE: September 1, 2000