

SUBJECT: Scented Products in the Workplace

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Lanark County endeavours to facilitate an indoor work environment that supports optimal health and well being for employees.

The quality of the indoor work environment may affect human health. It is recognized that scented products can produce health-related symptoms in sensitive employees.

This guideline is intended to raise awareness about the effects of scented products on some individuals, as well as to provide information to individuals as to what to do if they are affected by the use of these products at the workplace.

DEFINITION:

Fragrance – Any ingredient that is deliberately added to a product to impart a scent or mask a scent.

Scented products may include, but are not limited to, aftershave, lotions, hair spray, deodorants, air fresheners, perfumes and scented candles.

RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY ACT:

Employers have a responsibility for ensuring a healthy and safe work environment.

Employees have a responsibility to participate in the Employer's Occupational Health and Safety Program. As such, employees can promote a healthy and safe work environment through awareness of their own personal practices and the impact these practices may have on others. When it becomes known that a medically assessed, scented products sensitivity exists in a work environment, employees are requested to eliminate the use of irritating/offending product/s.

RESOLUTION PROCESS:**Employees:**

If a co-worker uses a scented product that is causing you health concerns:

- a. Communicate your concerns in a respectful, open manner to your co-worker and let them know how the scented product(s) affect your health and attempt to come up with a mutually agreeable resolution to the issue, or request that your co-worker eliminate the use of the offending scented product(s).

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- b. Alternatively, seek assistance of your Supervisor.
- c. If the co-worker(s) continue to choose to use scented products, discuss the situation with your supervisor who shall address the situation.

If approached by a co-worker about use of a scented product:

- a. Listen to concerns communicated.
- b. Seek clarification of the problem such as the type, amount, and form of scented product.
- c. Attempt to come up with a mutually agreeable resolution to the problem, or alternatively, refrain from the use of the offending scented product.

Supervisor:

If a concern is brought to your attention:

- a. Consult with the employee if s/he has attempted to address the situation directly with their co-worker.
- b. Discuss details as to how the offending scented product(s) is impacting the affected employee's health and/or their ability to perform their work.
- c. "Problem solve" and agree upon next steps which might necessitate medical assessment and recommendations, and/or an employee consultation with the Occupational Health & Safety Specialist.
- d. Discuss concerns separately with the individual(s) who use the offending scented product(s).
- e. Discuss with appropriate representatives in Human Resources, should this informal resolution process not be successful, or further assistance is required.
- f. If an employee has a documented medical condition aggravated by a scented product, communicate to all employees at the worksite the importance of eliminating the offending scented product(s) and post signage regarding the need to eliminate use of specific scented product(s) (see attached example).
- g. Maintain privacy and confidentiality of the employee(s) with underlying health issues that make them sensitive to scented products.
- h. Take other precautions and/or actions reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of the employee with sensitivities to a scented product.
- i. Following proper notification to employees at a worksite where there is a documented medical need to eliminate specific scented products, employees who are found to be not complying with these guidelines may be subject to discipline, in line with the Lanark County disciplinary procedure.

NOTIFICATION AND SIGNAGE:

Addressing Scents on Public Visitors to the County Premises:

In the event that an employee should encounter a member of the public or layman who is wearing a scented product, the employee will courteously bring the visitors attention to the signage posted at the entrance, and advise that due to chemical sensitivities, we ask that all individuals who attend to business on County Premises please refrain from wearing Personal Scented Products.

In the event that the interaction escalates to a challenging situation, the employee shall ask that the individual please remain present while they seek the support of their Supervisor.

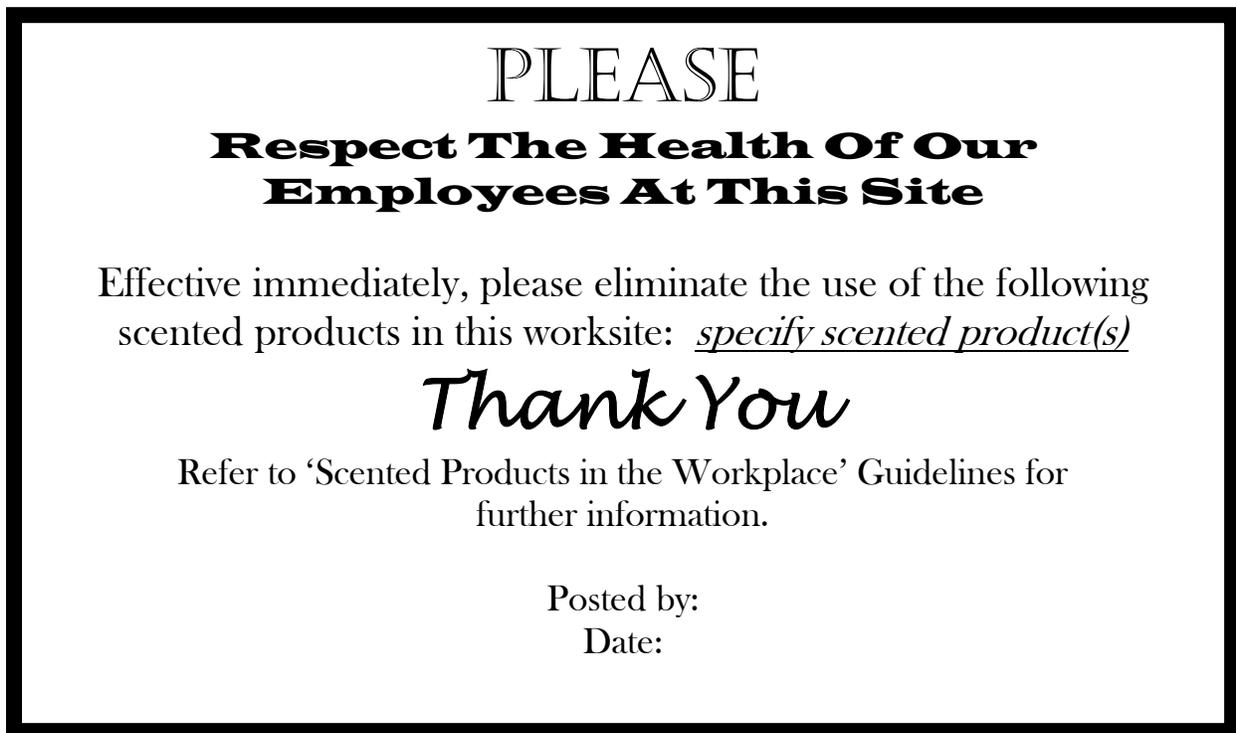
“**Prevention Notification**” in advance of meetings should be a consideration when it is known that an employee who has a documented medical condition aggravated by a scented product will be attending the meeting. The following wording is recommended as a general guide for the notice:

“The _____ department recognizes that scented products can produce health related symptoms in sensitive individuals, some of which can pose a serious health risk. We request that you please refrain from using scented products such as perfume and/aftershave during your visit.”

Signage for the Workplace:

In work areas where sensitivity to scented products is an issue, signs shall be posted near entrances to these work location.

Appendix A below indicates a general guide for the wording of the posted notice.



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Other examples, as shown below, may also be used to reflect the specific conditions and needs of a workplace.

Alternate wording for workplace signs:

- 1) Certain employees of the _____ Department report sensitivities to various chemical-based or scented products. Everyone's cooperation is requested in our efforts to eliminate the use of the following (list the specific problem products that have been medically identified for the specific workplace) scented products in this workplace.
- 2) In response to health concerns, Lanark County had developed a 'Scented Products in the Workplace' guideline. Scented products can trigger reactions such as respiratory distress and headaches. Staff and visitors are asked not to use the following products: (list the specific problem products that have been medically identified for the specific workplace) when reporting to this office.
- 3) Lanark County, _____ Department, _____(specific work area), in accordance with the 'Scented Products in the Workplace Guideline', requests that you do not use (list the specific problem products that have been medically identified for the specific workplace) products.

Other Resources:

Canadian Safety Council www.safety-council.org

Canadian Lung Association (for a listing of scent free products and other information)
www.lung.ca/asthma