

## 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 & aftershaves
  - fragrances & perfumes
  - lotions & creams
  - potpourri
  - industrial and household chemical
  - soaps & cosmetics
  - air fresheners & deodorizers
  - oils & candles
  - diapers & 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)