



LAC LA BICHE COUNTY PROCEDURE

TITLE: USE OF SCENTED PRODUCTS IN THE WORKPLACE
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

PROCEDURE NO: CS-03-014-20

SPECIAL NOTES/CROSS REFERENCE: POLICY CS-03-014

AMENDMENT DATE:

1.0 Purpose

Lac La Biche County endeavours to facilitate an indoor work environment that supports optimal health and well-being for employees by preventing exposure to scented products that can cause environmental chemical sensitivities.

Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, **Employers** have a responsibility for ensuring a healthy and safe work environment for their employees. **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 product sensitivity exists in a work environment, employees are requested to eliminate the use of the irritating/offending products.

The goals of these guidelines are to:

- Reduce the use of perfume, cologne/aftershave, scented air fresheners, scented candles and potpourri from the workplace;
- Reduce the use of heavily scented personal hygiene products such as hair products, lotions/creams and deodorant;
- Reduce heavily scented flowers in the workplace such as Lilacs, Hyacinth, Flowering broom etc.

2.0 Definition

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

Scented products include perfumes, body lotions and sprays, colognes, aftershaves and highly scented flowers and plants.

3.0 General Information:

Exposure to scented products can adversely affect a person's health. Insufficient concentrations scented products may trigger responses to those with allergies or chemical sensitivities. Allergic and asthmatic people, as well as those with other conditions, report that exposure to scented products, even in the smallest amounts, can trigger response. Reported symptoms can include, but are not limited to:

- Headaches, migraines
- Fatigue
- Skin irritation
- Upper respiratory symptoms
- Nausea
- Weakness
- Anxiety
- Sinus congestion
- Dizziness
- Difficulty with concentration
- Numbness
- Loss of appetite

The severity of these symptoms can vary. Some may only experience mild irritation while others can be incapacitated.

4.0 Resolution Process

i. Employees

What should you do if you are approached about your scent use practices?

- Listen respectfully to the specific request of the individual who has approached you.
- Be considerate of those who are sensitive to fragrance chemicals.
- Do not take the request as a personal attack. It is not about you, but about the chemicals in the product that you are using.
- Seek clarification of the problem such as the type, amount, and form of scented product.
- Attempt to come up with a mutually agreeable resolution to the problem, or alternatively, refrain from the use of the offending scented product.
- It is much easier for you to choose not to apply a particular scented fragrance than it is for the person who is sensitive to choose not to have a reaction (eg. Asthma attack, migraine, breathing difficulties).

What should you do if a co-worker uses a scented product that is causing you health concerns?

- 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.
- Alternatively, seek the assistance of your Supervisor.
- If the co-worker continues to choose to use scented products, discuss the situation with your supervisor who shall address the situation.

ii. Supervisor

What can you do as a supervisor?

- Model responsible scent use.
- Talk to your staff about scent reduction and working together for a safe and healthy environment for all staff and visitors.
- Advise the staff in a general fashion that there are people in the building who are sensitive to scented products and the staff need to modify their personal scent use practices accordingly.
- Promote scent reduction by posting posters in prominent areas of the workplace.
- If a staff member advises you of a particular sensitivity, listen with respect and empathy.
- Ensure you understand the particular situation and the conditions that are problematic for that staff member.
- Encourage the employee to address the situation directly with their co-worker.
- 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.
- Discuss concerns separately with the individual who use the offending scented product.
- If you have a staff member with sensitivities and symptoms beyond your capacity to reasonably accommodate, consult with the Health & Safety Coordinator.
- Maintain privacy and confidentiality of the employee with underlying health issues that make them sensitive to scented products.

5.0 Notifications

While this SOP provides a resolution process aimed at employees and supervisors of a work group, there are occasions when people with scent sensitivities may be required to be in the same space as others. (cross departmental meetings, events, training)

"Preventive Notification" in advance of meetings and Lac La Biche County-hosted training events should be a consideration when employees from various work areas come together for meetings and/or training and one or more may have a sensitivity to scented products.

6.0 Signage for the Workplace

In work areas where sensitivity to scented products is an issue, signs shall be posted near the entrances to these work locations. Posters and signs can be requested through the Health and Safety department.

“Original Signed”
Chief Administrative Officer

August 28, 2017
Date