



Core Capacity: Healthy Workplace
Date approved: February 19, 2007
Approved by: Management

Subject: Scent-Free Workplace

Policy

Due to health concerns arising from exposure to scented products, South-East Ottawa Centre for a Health Community (SEOCHC) has created this policy to provide a scent-free environment for all staff, volunteers, clients, program participants and community residents.

Medical evidence shows that scented products can be harmful to people with allergies, environmental sensitivity or chronic heart or lung disease. In considering the health needs and concerns of those sensitive and non-sensitive individuals alike, and to provide a healthy working environment for everyone, SEOCHC prohibits the use of scented products throughout the organization's facilities and programs.

Scented products can cause a variety of harmful reactions, such as asthma attacks, other breathing problems, nausea, dizziness, rashes and headaches, in a growing number of the population. To ensure scent-free facilities SEOCHC is committed to taking deliberate steps to eliminate the use of scented products in all SEOCHC facilities.

Scented products include, but are not limited to, personal toiletries, such as perfumes, body spray, cologne, aftershave, hair spray, skin creams, soaps, and cosmetics. Other scented products are air fresheners, deodorizers, oils, candles and incense. As well, some office supplies, cleaning and maintenance products contain scent. Products may be labeled unscented or fragrance free, this may mean the product has no scent or it may mean the product has had no scent added however, the product may have a natural scent. For the purpose of this policy SEOCHC considers scent free to mean odorless.

Staff, students, volunteers, clients, program participants and community members using SEOCHC services or participating in SEOCHC programs will be made aware of the Centre's scent-free policy and will abstain from the use of scented products.

Procedure

Signage will be posted, as appropriate, requesting that all staff, students, volunteers, clients, program participants and community members not use scented products while at any of the SEOCHC facilities.

Meeting and program announcements will contain a tag line informing participants to refrain from using scented products:

South-East Ottawa Community Health Centre provides a scent-free environment. Please do not wear perfumed products as some individuals have environmental sensitivities.

The following guidelines will be followed:

On first contact with clients, program participants or community residents making appointments or planning to use the services or programs of SEOCHC, staff will inform them of SEOCHC's scent-free policy and request that they do not wear any scented product when they visit SEOCHC's facilities.

If a client, program participant or community resident wears a scented product on a visit to any SEOCHC facility staff will remind them about SEOCHC's scent-free policy and again request that they do not wear any scented product when they use SEOCHC services or participate in any SEOCHC program.

Should a person continue to ignore the scent-free policy on subsequent visits to SEOCHC facilities and/or programs, staff will advise their manager. The manager or designate will speak to the person and inform them of the SEOCHC scent-free policy and advise them that if they continue to wear scented products, SEOCHC will not be able to serve them nor will they be able to access SEOCHC premises. After receiving this information, should a person continue to ignore the scent-free policy on their next visit, the manager will advise the individual in writing that if they do not adhere to the scent-free policy, they will not be able to use any SEOCHC services or attend programs or premises. Should the individual continue to ignore the scent-free policy the Executive Director will inform them in writing that they are unable to access the Centre services or facilities.

In the event that a staff member, volunteer or student uses any scented products, colleagues are requested to speak to the staff member, volunteer or student to inform them of the scent-free policy. If the staff member, volunteer or student continues to ignore the scent-free policy, colleagues will speak to their manager. The manager will request that the staff member, volunteer or student leave SEOCHC facilities and remove the scented product before they return. The time required to do this will not constitute working hours.

When purchasing office supplies, cleaning and maintenance products, preference will be given to those with the lowest content of volatile chemicals, for example non-toxic, water based markers.

With respect to office equipment SEOCHC shall

- Locate photocopiers in well-vented areas
- Provide appropriate ventilation to dilute unavoidable office pollutants

