

SCENT AWARENESS	
<b>Type of Policy:</b> Health and Safety	<b>Number:</b> HR-25
<b>Reviewed by:</b> OH&S Committee	<b>Approved by:</b> Executive Director
<b>Revision Date:</b> December 2015, October 2023	<b>Date Approved:</b> December 24, 2014

**Preamble:**

The purpose of the policy is to provide guidelines in respect to the wearing of fragrances or scented personal products in Hospice Simcoe facilities and the use of scented housekeeping products in the Hospice facilities.

Hospice Simcoe recognizes that exposure to chemicals in the workplace can have adverse health effects on our employees, volunteers and to those individuals we provide service to. Health effects in individuals can range from mild discomfort to severe allergic reactions and in some cases can be life threatening.

Hospice Simcoe wishes to limit the exposure of chemicals to staff, volunteers, residents/clients, families, and visitors.

**Policy:**

In support of Hospice Simcoe’s commitment to the provision of a healthy and safe environment for all, we will strive to provide an indoor air environment that reduces the risk of chemical hazards. Hospice Simcoe will help maintain a scent free environment, whenever possible, and eliminate the use of certain building cleaning products and materials, where scents are known to cause health problems.

This policy minimizes exposure to the chemicals in scented products, thereby promoting a healthy work environment and reducing the barriers to service those individuals with chemical sensitivities.

Hospice Simcoe is unable to guarantee scent -free environment facilities as we provide services to the public. However, each site shall provide appropriate information to all residents, clients and visitors and display signage to refrain from wearing scented products.

**Application:**

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, and students.

## **Definitions**

Environmental Sensitivities (ES) describes a chronic condition whereby a person has symptoms when exposed to certain chemicals or other environmental agents at low level tolerated by most people. (Source Women Health Matters, Women's College Hospital)

## **Procedure:**

### **1.0 Awareness**

- 1.1 Staff and volunteers will be informed of this policy through the policy manual and during orientation and onboarding.
- 1.2 Residents and clients will be informed of this policy through the intake process.
- 1.3 Visitors will be informed of this policy through posted written information in the facilities, and on the website. If a visitor is wearing a scented product, staff should inform visitors of this policy and encourage them to not wear scented products upon their return.

### **2.0 Responsibilities**

- 2.1 It is the responsibility of managers to ensure that this policy is communicated and adhered to by any employee, volunteer, or students in their department.
- 2.2 It is the responsibility of the employees, volunteers, and students to adhere to this policy and to refrain from wearing personal scented products while conducting Hospice related business. Personal products may include but are not limited to hair products, moisturizing creams, perfumes, body sprays, colognes, scented laundry products.
- 2.3 Anyone that requires accommodation must submit a written request to their direct manager and/or Human Resources.
- 2.4 Anyone required by medical necessity to use products that contain odors perceptible to others may request a reasonable accommodation from their manager or the human resources (HR) department.

### **2.0 Purchasing of Products**

- 2.1 Wherever practical, in our workplace, scent-free products should be used. The purchase and use of "unscented" products should be preferred over scented substitutes. This will involve the review of Material Safety Data Sheets for commercial products currently used and those intended for use as well as examination of product samples, to ensure that the ingredients are unscented.
- 2.2 Cleaning, maintenance, renovation, etc. with which an "atypical" odour is associated should be scheduled to occur at times of reduced occupancy, wherever possible.

2.3 During renovations when unscented products are not available, notification to all employees/volunteers should be sent out in a timely manner so to enable those with sensitivities to be able to be accommodated.

### **3.0 Reporting of Concerns**

3.1 Scent-related concerns will typically fall into one of two separate categories:

(a) Medically supported evidence of ill-health effects (either arising from or exacerbated by scents) provided; or

(b) Comfort- related concerns.

3.2. Any employee with a concern about scents or odors should contact their manager in a timely manner.

3.3 The Manager will make efforts to determine the category to which the complaint belongs.

3.4 The Manager should speak with all parties involved in a tactful and respectful manner, to explain that the concern has been reported, noted and response is occurring. If the scent concern is associated with another person, the Manager will discuss the scent -aware initiative of our workplace and request their participation in our attempts to achieve a scent-free work.

### **4.0 Resources on scents in the workplace**

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety

[https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/hsprograms/scent\\_free.html](https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/hsprograms/scent_free.html)

Canadian Human Rights Commission Policy on Environmental Sensitivities

<https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/en/resources/publications/policy-environmental-sensitivities>

