



Association pour la santé environnementale du Québec  
Environmental Health Association of Québec

April 20, 2021

To whom it may concern,

**Subject: Accessibility for persons experiencing environmental sensitivities**

The symptoms of Environmental Sensitivity/Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (ES/MCS)<sup>i</sup> are initiated/triggered by chemicals and other substances commonly used in the living environment. Exposures to a wide variety of products can cause or increase disability for persons experiencing ES/MCS.

This medical condition is a recognized disability under the Canadian Human Rights Act.<sup>ii</sup> According to Statistics Canada, over one million Canadians have been diagnosed with MCS as of 2016 and cases have been rising annually.<sup>iii</sup>

It is very possible that individuals experiencing this disability could very well be your clients or depend on your establishment for care. It has been reported to us that often there is hesitancy in requesting accommodation, leading to an exacerbation of existing disability.<sup>iv</sup> In order for persons experiencing this disability to have accessibility to essential services, it is important that barriers be removed: both in terms of making it easy to request accommodation and also that as a start, establishments choose least toxic solutions which are also fragrance-free, for all applications.

The following fact sheet titled '[Safer Cleaning Practices to Reduce COVID-19 Virus Spread](#)' will help you accommodate this disability by adopting the use of least toxic, yet effective methods for cleaning and sanitizing. It is important to always consult with the individual before adopting these changes by respecting the motto of the disabled: 'Nothing About Us Without Us'.





To learn about the chemical exposures that can provoke symptoms, kindly consult the following page: [Do you suffer from environmental sensitivities?](#) Furthermore, to learn about strategies that remove barriers and promote accessibility for the individual, please visit: [www.EcoLivingGuide.ca](http://www.EcoLivingGuide.ca)

You are welcome to contact our association for resources or additional guidance to eliminate barriers that cause the disability of ES/MCS.

Yours sincerely,

Michel Gaudet

Executive Director, ASEQ-EHAQ

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<sup>i</sup> Environmental Sensitivities-Multiple Chemical Sensitivities Status Report  
<https://aseq-ehaq.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/esmcsstatusreportjune220112.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> Canadian Human Rights Commission. (2019). *Environmental sensitivity and scent-free policies*. Retrieved from <https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/en/resources/publications/policy-environmental-sensitivities>

<sup>iii</sup> Statistics Canada (2015-2016) Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), Share File.

<sup>iv</sup> Peris, R. (2021). *MCS and COVID-19 Research Study: descriptive findings* [ PowerPoint Slides]. ASEQ-EHAQ