



Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) Design, Implement, and Monitor Scent/Fragrance-Free Policies



Empowering Community and Removal of Barriers (ECRoB)

Designing, implementing, and monitoring good policies are essential. In order to gain maximum cooperation, it is necessary to inform stakeholders, address concerns, and provide new and adequate information to keep everybody updated on any changes. Easily available information on appropriate product choices, including how to identify and choose healthy products, is key to ensuring the goal of having accessible indoor air for everyone.

Implementing a scent/fragrance-free policy in the workplace involves clear communication, education, and cooperation among employers, employees, and other stakeholders. Here are some steps to consider when implementing a scent/fragrance-free policy:

Note: The term 'scent/fragrance-free' includes all products free of scents, fragrances, perfumes, colognes, essential oils and masking agents.

Policy Development:

- Determine the scope and specifics of the policy, including what is considered "scent/fragrance-free" and which areas it applies to (for example, the entire building).
- Clearly define the goals of the policy - emphasizing the importance of accommodating individuals with Multiple Chemical Sensitivities (MCS), other disabilities and health conditions.

Obtain Leadership Support:

- Include management and other decision-makers at the beginning and regularly present the scent/fragrance-free policy as it is being developed.
- The benefits of a scent/fragrance-free workplace, such as improved air quality, increased productivity, increased comfort for employees, and improved equity, inclusion, and accessibility, must be at the core of decisions regarding the scent/fragrance-free policy.

Confidentiality:

- Encourage employees to report scent/fragrance-related sensitivities or concerns confidentially.
- Maintain privacy and respect for individuals who disclose their health conditions.
- Address any reported concerns promptly and take appropriate action to resolve issues.

Communication and Education:

- A regularly updated website educating on product choice guidelines, including details regarding 'greenwashing' and masking agents in 'scent-free' or 'unscented' products, which can cause harm to the person with MCS, and result in stigma and labelling as lack of transparency in product choices leads to frustration for the person providing accommodation.
- Provide clear and detailed information about the scent/fragrance-free policy to all employees, contractors, job applicants, and visitors.
- Hold regular meetings or training sessions to explain the policy, its purpose, and the potential health impacts of scents/fragrances.
- Explain how scents/fragrances can be barriers to inclusion and accessibility for a growing number of people.
- Distribute written materials or guidelines that outline what is expected regarding scent/fragrance use.

Messaging and Communications:

- Post signs in visible locations throughout the workplace to remind employees and visitors of the fragrance-free policy.
- Include reminders in newsletters, emails, phone messaging, job offers, or other communication channels to reinforce the policy regularly.

Collaboration and Support:

- Establish a designated point person or committee responsible for addressing questions and concerns, and enforcing the policy.
- Encourage a collaborative approach by involving employees in the implementation process, allowing them to provide feedback or suggestions.

Compliance and Enforcement:

- Regularly assess compliance with the scent/fragrance-free policy and address any violations promptly and consistently.
- Develop a protocol for handling non-compliance, which may involve educating the individual, issuing warnings, or implementing progressive disciplinary measures if necessary.

Ongoing Evaluation and Adjustments:

- Continuously evaluate the effectiveness of the scent/fragrance-free policy and make adjustments as needed.
- Encourage open communication and employee feedback to identify any challenges or areas for improvement.



Policies can be reinforced through:

- Messages and reminders on phones, through email, social media, or in person.
- Employment postings informing about fragrance-free policies in establishments.
- Informing visitors in advance of appointments.
- Visible signage in front of offices stating that the establishment is fragrance-free.
- A website that explains what it means to be scent/fragrance-free and how to choose least-toxic, scent/fragrance-free, or perfume-free products.

Remember, successfully implementing a scent/fragrance-free policy requires cooperation, understanding, and ongoing efforts from everyone in the workplace. Regular communication, education, and support are essential to ensure compliance and create a comfortable environment for all.

Resources for implementing a fragrance-free policy:

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS):

https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/hsprograms/scent_free.html

Eco-Living Guide: <https://www.EcoLivingGuide.ca>

Policy on Environmental Sensitivities, Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC):

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