



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

Scent Free Policy Request – Home Care Center

To Management at Home Care Center

[Your Name]

[Your Address]

[City, Province, Postal Code]

[Email Address]

[Date]

[Manager's Name or Position]

[Home Care Center Name]

[Address] [City, Province, Postal Code]

Dear [Manager's Name],

I am reaching out to request accommodations at [Home Care Center Name] due to my medical condition, Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS), a recognized disability characterized by severe reactions to even low-level exposures to common chemicals, such as those found in fragrances and cleaning products.

Similar to second-hand smoke, airborne chemicals like volatile organic compounds

Association pour la santé environnementale du Québec - Environmental Health Association of Québec (ASEQ-EHAQ)

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(VOCs) are pervasive—they spread easily and cannot be contained within specific zones.

The need to create fragrance-free environments for those with MCS is comparable to the move to ban smoking indoors. Just as smoke-free areas are now required in public spaces, fragrance-free policies are essential for the full inclusion of people with MCS. As a center that serves the public, and particularly older adults who are often more vulnerable to chemical exposures, I believe [Home Care Center Name] is in an ideal position to set a standard of inclusivity for this disability.

To create a truly safe and accessible environment, I respectfully request the following accommodations:

- 1. Adopt a Fragrance-Free Policy:** Please establish a fragrance-free policy that prohibits the use of scented products by staff and visitors. This would include items such as perfumes, colognes, scented lotions, and fragranced hair products.
- 2. Switch to fragrance-free, Low-VOC Cleaning Products:** Just as tobacco smoke was removed from indoor spaces, the use of fragranced cleaning and air-freshening products needs to be eliminated indoors. I ask that only fragrance-free, low-toxicity cleaning products be used. It is important to watch out for ‘greenwashing’ – such as mis-labelling a product ‘scent-free’ when it uses masking agents to hide the scents.
- 3. Educate Staff and Visitors on Fragrance-Free Requirements:** Implement education for staff and visitors to understand the importance of a fragrance-free environment, and provide reminders of the fragrance-free policy through signs and written guidelines including on the website.

Over 1.13 million people have a diagnosis of MCS of which 72% are women and 50% are over the age of 50 (Statistics Canada, 2020). The prevalence of this medical disability has been increasing (Statistics Canada 2000-2020).

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These measures will help ensure a safe and inclusive environment for individuals with MCS and prevent severe health reactions, such as respiratory distress, migraines, and other systemic symptoms.

To help with this, I have attached a list of resources below.

Thank you very much for considering this essential step towards inclusivity. I am happy to discuss this further and answer any questions regarding MCS or these requested accommodations.

Warm regards,

[Your Name]

Resources for Developing a Scent-Free Policy

Here are several resources that provide comprehensive guidance on implementing scent-free policies, understanding Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS), and educating staff and visitors on the importance of a fragrance-free environment. These can help a center or organization create a safe and inclusive space for people with MCS.

1. Resources on MCS

-Link: https://aseq-ehaq.ca/pdf/Resources_MCS.pdf

2. The Empowering Community and Removal of Barriers (ECRoB) Project

The Empowering Community and Removal of Barriers (ECRoB) project aims to increase awareness and create accessible environments for individuals with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) through education, advocacy, and partnerships. It focuses on building capacity within communities and organizations to support those with MCS by promoting

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inclusive policies, knowledge sharing, and sustainable practices that enhance accessibility and reduce exposure to harmful chemicals.

-Link: <https://aseq-ehaq.ca/en/ecrob/>

3. Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS): Scent-Free Policy for the Workplace

This resource offers guidelines on creating and implementing scent-free policies in workplaces. It includes information on why scent-free policies are needed and tips for educating staff.

-Link: CCOHS Scent Free Policy Guidelines -

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

4. Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC): Environmental Sensitivities and Scent-Free Policies

The CHRC provides a comprehensive guide on accommodating environmental sensitivities/Multiple Chemical Sensitivity, including the development of scent-free policies, as part of their commitment to human rights in the workplace and public spaces.

-Link: CHRC Environmental Sensitivities Guide - <https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/en/resources/publications/environmental-sensitivities-and-scent-free-policies>)

5. Environmental Health Association of Québec (ASEQ-EHAQ): Scent-Free Toolkit

ASEQ-EHAQ offers a toolkit designed to help institutions implement fragrance-free policies. It includes a sample policy, educational materials, and signage templates to promote a fragrance-free environment.

-Link: ASEQ-EHAQ Scent-Free Toolkit - <https://aseq-ehaq.ca/en/resources/fragrance/>

6. Multiple Chemical Sensitivity: A Guide for Employers and Service Providers

This guide provides insights into MCS, its symptoms, triggers, and the importance of fragrance-free policies in accommodating individuals with this medical condition.

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- Link: MCS Guide for Employers and Service Providers - <https://aseq-ehaq.ca/en/workplace-accommodation/>

7. Scent-Free Zone Signs and Posters

ASEQ-EHAQ Signage Toolkit: Includes printable posters and signs to indicate scent-free zones and educate visitors and staff.

-Link: ASEQ-EHAQ Signage - <https://aseq-ehaq.ca/en/toolkit/>

These resources will help a center or organization develop a comprehensive scent-free policy, educate staff and visitors, and implement fragrance-free practices to create a safe environment for people with MCS and fragrance sensitivity.

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