



Durham Catholic District School Board

"The Board"

Administrative Procedure

Title: Scented Personal Products	Procedure #: AP318-2
Administrative Area:	Human Resources & Administrative Services
Policy Reference:	Occupational Health & Safety (PO318)
Date Approved:	February 10, 2014
Dates of Amendment:	

1.0 **Purpose**

The Durham Catholic District School Board (DCDSB) is committed to a safe, healthy and respectful workplace and learning environment for employees, students and the school community. Due to health concerns arising from individual's exposure to scented products, this guideline's primary goal is to reduce the use of scented products in the workplace and learning environment and has been written to:

- Increase the awareness within the DCDSB about the potential impact of chemical and fragrance sensitivities on the health, well-being, productivity and the lifestyle of those affected.
- Ask for voluntary cooperation towards a scent safe environment.
- Provide assistance in responding to scent-related issues.

2.0 **Definitions**

Scented products more commonly used include, but would not be limited to:

- Personal Hygiene Products (e.g., hair sprays, colognes, aftershaves, fragrances and perfumes, soaps, powders, cosmetics, deodorants, lotions, creams);
- Industrial and household chemicals and cleaners (e.g., Javex Wipes, Lysol Wipes, Mr. Clean, Magic Eraser, Lysol, paints, etc.);
- Air fresheners and deodorizers (e.g., Febreze, Glade and similar products, potpourri, oils, etc.);
- Various household products (e.g., aerosols and alcohol-based hand sanitizers).

Refer to Appendix A for information regarding potential health related symptoms.

3.0 **Procedures**

Individuals should act in a responsible and respectful manner that does not place other individuals known to have sensitivity at risk of sensitivity or allergic reaction.

3.1 **School Community**

- 3.1.1 Be considerate of those who are sensitive to fragrance chemicals.
- 3.1.2 Avoid using scented products; use scent reduced alternatives.
- 3.1.3 If you do use scented products, use them sparingly. The scent should not be detectable from more than an arm's length away from you.
- 3.1.4 Avoid applying scented products in a public area.

3.2 **Individual Responsibility**

If one is experiencing difficulties with a scent, one may:

- 3.2.1 Approach the user of the scented product in a cordial and respectful manner.
- 3.2.2 Explain your physical reaction(s) to the scented product.
- 3.2.3 Seek the individual's understanding and cooperation.
- 3.2.4 Report immediately to the supervisor, the allergens or scents that may trigger an adverse physical reaction. Explain your physical reactions to scented products. Where such reactions may be severe or life threatening, the WSIB/Disability Claims Management Officer will be notified by your supervisor.
- 3.2.5 Let others around you know of your health concerns, if you have allergies or sensitivities if you are not concerned about personal confidentiality; otherwise defer to your supervisor.

3.3 **Supervisors**

If an individual in your work area or classroom is adversely affected by scented products:

- 3.3.1 Listen to and document the individual's concerns. Ensure confidentiality is maintained.
- 3.3.2 Clarify the issue. Ask the individual to describe their health effect, the factors that make the problem better or worse, and the actions they are taking to deal with it.

3.0 **Procedures** (Cont'd)

3.3 **Supervisors** (Cont'd)

- 3.3.3 Where supervisors receive information from an individual that the individual's reaction may be severe or life threatening, the WSIB/Disability Claims Management Officer shall be notified.
- 3.3.4 Communicate without compromising the privacy of the individual that all sensitivity issues to individuals in the specific work area or learning area on file with known allergies and request co-operation in the restriction of the use of personal and other products.
- 3.3.5 Communicate all scheduled renovation or construction work to affected individual(s), and, if necessary make arrangements to have environmentally sensitive individual(s) temporarily relocated, if possible.
- 3.3.6 Ensure that any personal products used in the workplace and learning environment are appropriately labelled, where required, if an individual wishes to use them.
- 3.3.7 Ensure that all employees are aware of the Scented Personal Products Administrative Procedure.
- 3.3.8 Promote the information in this Administrative Procedure. An information poster may be displayed to assist in achieving scent awareness.

3.4 **Individual who is wearing scented product(s) and is approached by another individual**

- 3.4.1 Do not take the request personally – this is about the impacts of scents on people, not about you.
- 3.4.2 Become informed and be part of the solution and consider switching to fragrance-free or fragrance-reduced products.
- 3.4.3 Whenever discussing this issue, remember not to be confrontational or hostile, and focus on the fact that someone's comfort or health is being compromised.

If you are a student having reactions to scented products worn by others at school:

- 3.4.4 If you know the person well and feel comfortable with him or her, talk to them about what you think is bothering you about the scent.
- 3.4.5 If you do not feel comfortable talking to the individual, tell a teacher, your school principal and your parent/guardian about your concern.

3.0 **Procedures** (Cont'd)

3.5 **Parents/Guardians**

Where parents/guardians have provided medical documentation from a physician citing a student's medical condition is related to scented products in the school, as with other serious allergies, school administration will notify students/staff/parents/guardians and community use participants and Board staff of such serious allergies. This may be communicated through signage on exterior entrance doors to the school and through school newsletter communications.

4.0 **Sources**

- Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety
- Scented Products Education & Information Association of Canada
- Workers Health & Safety Centre
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act*
- *Ontario Human Rights Code*

5.0 **References**

- Occupational Health and Safety Policy (PO318)
- Exceptional Health Conditions Policy (PO606)
- Protection of Anaphylactic Students Policy (PO608)
- Appendix A – Excerpt from Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety

Appendix A

Excerpt from Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety

Can scents cause health problems?

When scented products have been blamed for adversely affecting a person's health, some or all of the following symptoms are reported:

- headaches
- dizziness, lightheadedness
- nausea
- fatigue
- weakness
- insomnia
- malaise
- confusion
- loss of appetite
- depression
- anxiety
- numbness
- upper respiratory symptoms
- shortness of breath
- difficulty with concentration
- skin irritation

Allergic and asthmatic patients, as well as those with other conditions, report that certain odours, even in the smallest amounts, can trigger an attack.

The severity of these symptoms can vary. Some people report mild irritation while others are incapacitated and/or must give up many 'normal' activities in order to avoid exposure (such as going to public places).