


North Bay Regional Health Centre  Centre régional de santé de North Bay	Policy/Procedure	
Title Scent Free Policy	Policy Number HR 4-103	
Developer Manager Occupational Health Safety & Wellness	Category	Organization wide
	Issue Date	April 2017
Executive Sponsor VP, Corporate & CFO	Revision Date	October 2024
	Next Review Date	October 2025

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1.0 Scope of Policy/Procedure

To ensure that patients, visitors, staff and volunteers are provided with an environment that is as free from scented products, as is reasonably achievable in order to decrease the risk of adverse reactions to these products.

Individuals may be impacted by certain odors, even in the smallest amounts and can trigger a response such as allergies or migraines. In addition, those persons with conditions such as asthma, allergies and "multiple chemical sensitivity" may also be affected. The severity of symptoms can vary from mild irritation while others may be incapacitated.

2.0 Policy Statement

NBRHC affirms its commitment to providing a safe and inclusive environment. All staff, patients, visitors, and volunteers are to refrain from using or wearing scented products thereby supporting a scent free environment.

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3.0 Definitions

Term	Definition
Scents	<p>Scents are included in a very large range of products including but not limited to the following : Shampoo & Conditioners, potpourri, fragrances & perfumes, lotions & creams, soaps, colognes & aftershaves, deodorants, oils, air fresheners & deodorizers, hair sprays, candles, industrial & household chemicals, cosmetics, paint, flowers and third hand smoke (Third-hand smoke is contamination by tobacco smoke that lingers following the extinguishing of a cigarette).</p> <p>*It is important to remember that some products which claim to be “scent free” may have only masked the scent by use of an additional chemical.</p>

4.0 Procedure/Process

4.1 Responsibility

Managers/Supervisors:

- Support a scent free environment and enforce compliance.
- Ensure that materials and other resources required to maintain a scent-free environment are readily available (i.e., posted signs, promotional materials, presentations, etc).
- Respond to reported concerns and take necessary action in a timely manner. The manager is to discuss with the individual(s) how the issue can be resolved. Resolutions should be documented and inform all parties of what has been agreed upon. Any subsequent reoccurrence will be treated as a violation of this policy and be subject to progressive discipline.
- Implement this policy by communicating and where applicable creating standard work as appropriate in your individual areas to support a scent free environment. i.e.

Clinical Example:

- Patients/clients/residents scheduled for surgery must be advised of this policy when they are notified of the date their surgery is scheduled.

Corporate Example:

- Units scheduled for construction, painting, cleaning must be advised of such to allow for arrangements to be made if necessary.

Communications:

- Assist with educating the public and visitors of a scent-free environment with appropriate signage at entrances, notices on the internet and messaging.

Human Resources:

- Develop and maintain an effective scent-free workplace policy.
- Communicate this policy with new and potential employees.
- Provide guidance regarding this policy and act as a resource to managers and staff.

Occupational Health, Safety & Wellness:

- Review and follow up on reports and/or incidents associated with exposure to scented products and provide support as needed.

Facilities/Environmental Services:

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- Ensure that products used for construction, maintenance, and cleaning are scent-free, where possible.
- Inform contractors of this policy before they visit any NBRHC facility.
- Notify appropriate personnel when work is to take place that may involve the use of scented products, or products that contain an odor that may affect the health of staff. Sufficient advance warning should be given to allow employee accommodation to take place, if necessary.

Joint Health and Safety Committee:

- Promote employee education in the use and effects of scented products.
- Support managers and staff in maintaining a scent-free workplace.

Employees:

- Support a scent free environment by refraining from wearing or bringing scented products to NBRHC.
- Respectfully and in good faith communicate with each other to advise where a scented product may be impacting someone.
- Advise your manager and/or Occupational Health, Safety & Wellness of a situation and/or incident where you are suffering from the effects of scented products in the workplace.
- Report highly sensitive allergies to Occupational Health, Safety & Wellness for assistance on how to manage their allergies.
- Participate in scent free awareness education when it is available.
- Report any unsafe conditions or acts to your manager.

Patients and Visitors:

- Patients/clients/residents must be advised of this policy when they are notified of any appointment.
- Visitors may be informed of this policy at any time.
- A patient/visitor may be asked to leave an area should an incident occur where an individual is impacted by the situation.
- Incidents of patients who are found to be in violation of this policy will be reported to the manager/supervisor of the unit for follow up taking into consideration individual situations and care plan needs.

4.2 Exemptions

- Exemption to this policy are scents resulting as a by product of smudging or burning of traditional medicines used in cultural practices

5.0 References

Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act R.S.O. 1990
 Ontario Human Rights Commission – website
 Northeast Mental Health Centre – Scent Free Policy
 Work Safe BC–Scent Safety in the Workplace February 4, 2010
 Nipissing First Nation- Scent Free Policy March 25, 2020
 Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action
 United Nations Declaration of the Right of Indigenous Peoples

6.0 Stakeholder Review

Primary Stakeholders	Month/Year Reviewed
Occupational Health Safety and Wellness	October 2024
Patient Advocate	October 2024
Manager, Environmental Services	October 2024

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Director, Communications and Strategic Partnerships	October 2024
Committee Stakeholders	Month/Year Reviewed
Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee	August 2024
Managers /Directors	August 2023

7.0 Approval

Signing Authority Signature	Date Signed
VP, Corporate & CFO	October 10, 2024

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