

GENERAL MANUAL - POLICY/PROCEDURE

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Effective Date: March, 2010  
Reviewed: April, 2011

*Issued By:-* Joint Health and Safety Committee

*Approved by:-* Joint Health and Safety Committee

*Title: -* **INDOOR AIR QUALITY: SCENTED PRODUCTS AND FRAGRANCES**

**Policy Number:** VI-k-30-31

**Key Words:**

Scents, Fragrance, Air quality.

**Stakeholders:**

All Employees, Physicians, Students, Volunteers, Contractors, Plexxus

**Definitions:**

**Fragrance free/unscented:** According to Health Canada's labeling regulations, "fragrance free/unscented" means that no fragrance has been added to the cosmetic product, or that a masking agent has been added in order to suppress the scents from the other ingredients in the cosmetic.

**Scented Personal Products:** Refers to any scented personal care product including, but not limited to, perfume, cologne, essential oils, scented aftershave lotions, scented deodorant, scented moisturizing hand, body or face washes, lotions or sprays, massage oils, scented sunscreen, and any scented hair shampoo/ conditioner/ mousse/ gel/hairspray, scented powder or talc, solid or spray air fresheners, incense and potpourri.

**Policy Statement:**

Mount Sinai Hospital will strive to ensure that the use of **chemical** products with scents and fragrances, are minimized or, where necessary, based on health risk, eliminated.

The issues around the health effects of exposure to scented products are complex. In consideration of the allergies and sensitivities from which many people suffer, and in recognition of the fact that there is evidence to support the theory that scented products may trigger symptoms of the above noted health conditions, the wearing of scented personal products within hospital buildings is to be limited, so that the use does not cause any sort of negative health reaction or discomfort.

**Procedure:**

**1. Purchasing policy for hospital products (cleaning product etc)**

- Whenever possible, MSH will purchase products with no fragrance, or minimal/low fragrance. This includes, but is not limited to, cleaning products and hand hygiene products.

**2. Use of personal scented products:**

- Employees, physicians, students, volunteers and contract workers are asked to avoid scented personal products while at work and be considerate about their use of scented personal care products when in the hospital. The use of these products should be limited in order to minimize health risks among our population.
- Scents and fragrances will be limited to the use of products necessary for the care and comfort of clients and staff, and to the proper maintenance and operation at Mount Sinai.

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### **3. Awareness and communication**

- An awareness program to support the policy will be developed and administered (Signage for staff and visitors, MNet, MSH news on the intranet).
- At employee orientation, new employees will be informed that MSH has a policy on scents and fragrances
- This information will also be included in the information to hospital volunteers and in contractor agreements
- Where possible, suppliers will be notified of this policy and MSH will attempt to purchase and use fragrance-free products.

### **4. Procedure and Recourse to address concerns related to scent/fragrance sensitivity**

- Every Employee, Volunteer, Physician, and Contractor will be asked to comply with the policy.
- Any concerns about the scented personal products used by a co-worker, patient or visitor should be communicated to the individual in a cordial and respectful manner with reference to the policy.
- An employee who is not comfortable communicating this policy to the person using scented personal products should discuss the concern with their supervisor or manager.
- Employees experiencing an adverse reaction should notify his/her manager and an employee incident report will be completed and sent to Occupational Health and Safety. The manager shall investigate the situation. The employee experiencing the adverse reaction shall go to the Occupational Health and Safety Department for follow up.
- If the source of the scent is a personal product, the user shall be reminded of the current hospital policy and be requested to refrain from use.
- If the source of the scent is a Mount Sinai Hospital product it shall be replaced with an alternative, wherever possible.
- A manager may deem it appropriate to make an area "scent sensitive".
- A manager or designate has the authority to direct a person wearing the product (if that person is an employee or a volunteer) to take steps to remove the scented product so that the scent is no longer evident.
- Managers/Supervisors should consult Occupational Health and Safety Department and Human Resources for further information and support.

#### ***References:***

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety

[http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/hsprograms/scent\\_free.html](http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/hsprograms/scent_free.html)

Canada Safety Council <http://canadasafetycouncil.org/workplace-safety/perfume-workplace>