

Procedure	Fragrance-Free Environment		
Owner:	VP People & Employee Experience (CHRE)		
Endorsed By:	VP People & Employee Experience (CHRE)	Endorsement Date:	2024-03-15
Original Effective Date:	2001-07-05	Reviewed Date:	2024-03-13
Corporate Associated Policy	Corporate Policy Statement on Health and Safety		
Key Search Words:	Scent-free, Scent, Allergies, Fragrance Sensitivity, Scented Products, Detergents, Fabric Softeners, Perfume, Smudging, Cologne, After-Shave Product, Hair Spray, Body Spray, Soaps, Lotions/Creams, Alcohol-Based Hand Rub, Powders, Deodorants/Antiperspirants, Cleaning Products, Potpourris, Air Fresheners		

PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to establish expectations for London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC) staff and affiliates to refrain from using or wearing fragrance products as per [Occupational Health and Safety Act \(OHSA\)](#) and requirements under the [Health Care and Residential Facilities Regulation 67/93, sections 9](#), which pertain to chemical and biological agents. Accommodation to environmental sensitivities is also covered under the [Canadian Human Rights Commission \(CHRC\)](#).

The guiding principle is that no staff/affiliate performing work on behalf of LHSC and no person receiving care or visiting LHSC facilities shall be exposed to a fragrance product or stimuli that causes serious adverse health effects.

LHSC will strive to only authorize the use of fragrance-free and mildly [scented](#) products. Should the use of a fragrance product be necessary, measures and procedures will be established to minimize the health impact.

This procedure does not apply to the use of Tobacco, Cedar, Sage and Sweetgrass for the purpose of traditional ceremonies by Indigenous persons on LHSC property.

Patients, families and visitors/care partners are asked to refrain from using or wearing fragrance products or from bringing fragrance products to LHSC facilities/events.

AUDIENCE

This procedure applies to all LHSC leaders, staff, including individuals working at LHSC funded through external sources, Credentialed Professional Staff, residents, learners, volunteers and contract workers. It applies to work conducted both onsite at LHSC owned and rented properties.

PROCEDURE

1. Roles and Responsibilities

1.1. Staff and Affiliates will:

1.1.1. Work in a safe, respectful manner by choosing [fragrance-free, scent-free or unscented products](#).

1.1.2. Inform or remind staff and affiliates, patients, families and visitors/care partners about this procedure and request compliance as required.

Disclaimer: This is a controlled document. Printed copies of this document are uncontrolled and subject to change. Users must view the electronic version located on PolicyManager to ensure the most up to date document is consulted. This document has been created specifically for London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC) and may not be applicable for other organizations. This document is the intellectual property of LHSC. It is not to be shared or duplicated without permission.

- 1.1.3. Immediately notify the appropriate leader either in person, by phone or by pager about all fragrance hazard(s) that cannot be controlled.
- 1.1.4. Submit a Workplace Injury/Illness/Hazard: Chemical Exposure event in the online safety system when an incident occurs (refer to [Staff Safety Event and Hazard Reporting](#)). Affiliate events will be reported in the online safety system in accordance with the [Incident Reporting and Management](#).
- 1.1.5. Complete a [Product Complaint Form](#) for fragrance related complaints involving products supplied by Healthcare Materials Management Services (HMMS) and provide to area leadership.
- 1.1.6. Notify Occupational Health and Safety Services to self-identify fragrance related sensitivities or allergies.
- 1.2. Area Leadership will:
 - 1.2.1. Educate and provide on-going communication to all staff, affiliates, patient and visitors/care partners about this procedure and maintain records to demonstrate compliance.
 - 1.2.2. Post LHSC approved [fragrance-free signs \(OCC0014-OND\)](#) in department high traffic area(s) including:
 - 1.2.2.1. Main department entrances,
 - 1.2.2.2. Registration,
 - 1.2.2.3. Communication desk,
 - 1.2.2.4. Waiting rooms, and
 - 1.2.2.5. Staff bulletin boards.
 - 1.2.3. Select products that are fragrance-free or mildly scented whenever reasonably practicable.
 - 1.2.4. Inform or remind staff and affiliates, patients, families and visitors/care partners about this procedure as required.
 - 1.2.5. Monitor area(s) for compliance to ensure only HMMS [authorized products](#) are used.
 - 1.2.6. Assess all fragrance related hazards that you become aware of to determine if there is an imminent risk, investigate as appropriate and take reasonable corrective actions to control the hazard.
 - 1.2.7. Update events reported through the online safety system as required.
 - 1.2.8. Complete [Pre-Purchase and Hazardous Substance Risk Assessment \(OCC0016-OND\)](#) for any new products and submit for evaluation.
- 1.3. Occupational Health and Safety Services (OHSS) will:
 - 1.3.1. Assist leaders and staff to achieve a healthy work environment for individuals with fragrance sensitivities or allergies.
 - 1.3.2. Assist in assessing and approving products that contain fragrance and their use.
- 1.4. Security will:
 - 1.4.1. Respond to situations that may arise related to the administration of this procedure as required.
- 1.5. Healthcare Materials Management Services (HMMS) will:
 - 1.5.1. Educate and provide on-going communication about this procedure to contractors, suppliers, sales representatives etc. and maintain records to demonstrate compliance.
 - 1.5.2. Ensure all products are fragrance free or mildly scented.
 - 1.5.3. Investigate any product complaint received related to fragrance.
 - 1.5.4. Assist leaders to resolve fragrance related concerns involving contractors, suppliers, sales representatives etc.
- 1.6. Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) will:
 - 1.6.1. Inspect areas to monitor and support compliance.
 - 1.6.2. Promote staff education in the use and effects of fragrance products.

Disclaimer: This is a controlled document. Printed copies of this document are uncontrolled and subject to change. Users must view the electronic version located on PolicyManager to ensure the most up to date document is consulted. This document has been created specifically for London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC) and may not be applicable for other organizations. This document is the intellectual property of LHSC. It is not to be shared or duplicated without permission.

- 1.7. Facilities Management will:
 - 1.7.1. Ensure approved [fragrance-free signs \(OCC0014-OND\)](#) are posted at building entrances and in high traffic public areas such as elevator bays, cafeteria, public washrooms.
- 1.8. Human Resources will:
 - 1.8.1. Educate new hires about this procedure and maintain records to demonstrate compliance.
 - 1.8.2. Assist leaders to resolve fragrance related concerns involving LHSC staff.
- 1.9. Medical Affairs will:
 - 1.9.1. Educate and provide on-going communication about this procedure to credentialed professional staff and residents and maintain records to demonstrate compliance.
 - 1.9.2. Assist leaders to resolve fragrance related concerns involving professional staff.
- 1.10. Learner Affairs will:
 - 1.10.1. Educate and provide on-going communication about this procedure to academic centres and non-medical learners and maintain records to demonstrate compliance.
 - 1.10.2. Assist leaders to resolve fragrance related concerns involving non-medical learners.
- 1.11. Volunteer Services will:
 - 1.11.1. Educate and provide on-going communication about this procedure to volunteers.
 - 1.11.2. Assist leaders to resolve fragrance related concerns involving volunteers.
- 1.12. Corporate Communications and Public Relations will:
 - 1.12.1. Assist with education and on-going communications about this procedure to the general public before visiting LHSC.

2. Prevention

- 2.1. Use fragrance-free laundering products (detergents, fabric softeners), air out dry-cleaning, and launder clothes when fragrance was used.
- 2.2. When scheduling appointments, ask patients, family and visitors/care partners to refrain from using, wearing or bringing fragrance products into the hospital.
- 2.3. Ask individuals or groups (e.g., contractors, suppliers, sales representatives) who are scheduled for a planned activity within LHSC to refrain from using, wearing or bringing fragrance products into the hospital.
- 2.4. Inform local floral retailers about this procedure and request only low-scent flowers for areas where permitted.
- 2.5. Consult with OHSS prior to using any fragrance products not authorized by the organization by completing and submitting a [Pre-Purchase and Hazardous Substance Risk Assessment \(OCC0016-OND\)](#).
- 2.6. Store authorized fragrance products in tightly closed, ventilated areas away from staff/affiliates, patients and visitors/care partners when not in use.

3. Incident Management

- 3.1. If an individual is wearing or using a fragrance product and no adverse health effects are experienced:
 - 3.1.1. Respectfully approach the individual.
 - 3.1.2. State the facts (i.e., what is observed such as fragrance product or smell).
 - 3.1.3. Explain your concern and reference this procedure.
 - 3.1.4. Seek their input – allow the individual to tell his or her side of the story.

Disclaimer: This is a controlled document. Printed copies of this document are uncontrolled and subject to change. Users must view the electronic version located on PolicyManager to ensure the most up to date document is consulted. This document has been created specifically for London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC) and may not be applicable for other organizations. This document is the intellectual property of LHSC. It is not to be shared or duplicated without permission.

- 3.1.5. Request that the individual remove the fragrance product (e.g., wash, change clothing). In certain situations, the individual may be asked to leave the area and patients may be asked to wash and/or be provided with a gown.
- 3.1.6. If the situation escalates, let your leader know, beyond security control. Contact Security for assistance as required.
- 3.1.7. If the situation is unresolved, immediately notify the appropriate leader either in person, by phone or by pager about all fragrance hazard(s) that cannot be controlled.
- 3.2. If staff/affiliates experience adverse health effects related to a fragrance:
 - 3.2.1. Leave the area and report to OHSS during business hours or to the Emergency Department (ED) after hours as required.
 - 3.2.2. Immediately notify the appropriate leader either in person, by phone or pager.
- 3.3. Submit a Workplace Injury/Illness/Hazard: Chemical Exposure event in the online safety system. (Refer to the [Staff Safety Event and Hazard Reporting](#).) Affiliate events will be reported in the online safety system in accordance with the [Incident Reporting and Management](#).
- 3.4. When patients or visitors/care partners experience discomfort or adverse health effects related to a fragrance product.
 - 3.4.1. Notify the Most Responsible Provider (MRP) and leader.
 - 3.4.2. Report the event in the online safety system (refer to the [Incident Reporting and Management](#)).
- 3.5. The appropriate leader, once made aware, must promptly assess all fragrance related events to determine if there is an imminent risk, investigate as appropriate and take reasonable corrective actions to control the situation. Other leaders or resources may be requested to assist with the investigation.
- 3.6. Complete a [Product Complaint Form](#) for fragrance related complaints involving products supplied by Healthcare Materials Management Services (HMMS). Send complaints involving vendors to HMMS by emailing "Vendor Feedback" through Outlook.
- 3.7. Area leadership may request assistance through Facilities Management to increase ventilation in areas (if possible) where fragrance products are detected or used, as required.

DEFINITIONS

Affiliates – Individuals who are not employed by the organization but perform specific tasks at or for the organization, including:

- Credentialed Professional Staff with a hospital appointment (e.g., physicians, midwives, dentists),
- Learners,
- Volunteers,
- Contractors or contracted workers who may be members of a third-party contract or under direct contract with the organization, and
- Individuals working at the organization but funded through an external source.

Authorized Products – Any product that has received recommendation or approval from the Healthcare Materials Management Services (HMMS), Product Evaluation and Standardization Committee and OHSS.

Fragrance – Any substance that emits a noticeable scent. It includes but is not limited to personal care products such as perfume, cologne, after-shave product, hair care products (hair spray, gel, mousse, hair conditioners and shampoos), body sprays, soaps, lotions/creams, alcohol-based hand rub, powders,

Disclaimer: This is a controlled document. Printed copies of this document are uncontrolled and subject to change. Users must view the electronic version located on PolicyManager to ensure the most up to date document is consulted. This document has been created specifically for London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC) and may not be applicable for other organizations. This document is the intellectual property of LHSC. It is not to be shared or duplicated without permission.

deodorants/antiperspirants, cleaning products, potpourris and air fresheners (solid and spray) that contain fragrance and are not authorized by LHSC. It also includes high-fragrance flowers.

Fragrance-Free, Scent-Free or Unscented – No fragrances have been added to the product or a masking agent has been added in order to hide the scents of the ingredients.

Scent – A distinctive, characteristic odor. Some substances by their very nature emit a scent such as certain chemicals, flowers etc. Other products have chemicals or other agents added to the ingredients to create an often-agreeable odor.

Smoking – The carrying of or having in their possession an e-cigarette, burning cigarette, cigar or pipe containing burning tobacco or the burning of tobacco, or any other substance, such as marijuana, that can be smoked in any other manner including a personal vaporizer.

REFERENCES

Legislation

[Health Care and Residential Facilities Regulation](#), Section 9 (1)(7)
[Canadian Human Rights Commission – Policy on Environmental Sensitivities](#)

Corporate

[Staff Safety Event and Hazard Reporting](#)
[Incident Reporting and Management](#)
[Smoke-Free Environment](#)
[Interpretation and Translation Services](#)
[Managing Patient and Care Partner Feedback](#)
Indigenous Traditional Medicines and Ceremony (in development)

Other Resources

[Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety \(CCOHS\) Scent-Free Policy for the Workplace](#)
[Canadian Lung Association](#)

Forms

[HMMS Product Complaint](#)
[Pre-Purchase and Hazardous Substance Risk Assessment \(OCC0016-OND\)](#)
[Fragrance-Free Sign \(OCC0014-OND\)](#)

Disclaimer: This is a controlled document. Printed copies of this document are uncontrolled and subject to change. Users must view the electronic version located on PolicyManager to ensure the most up to date document is consulted. This document has been created specifically for London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC) and may not be applicable for other organizations. This document is the intellectual property of LHSC. It is not to be shared or duplicated without permission.