

PSAC
AWARENESS
KIT
ON
SCENT-FREE
ENVIRONMENTS

(Chemical Sensitivities - Environmental Illness)

Mai 1998

No Perfume Means Healthier Air!

DID YOU KNOW

**Perfume today is not made from flowers
but from toxic chemicals.
It's about as romantic as hazardous waste.**

**More than 4,000 chemicals are used in fragrances.
Of these, 95% are made from petroleum.**

**No agency regulates the fragrance industry,
yet perfume chemicals are as damaging to health
as tobacco smoke.**

Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (Environmental Illness)

Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) is basically a subset of Environmental Illness (EI), which is caused by living in a toxic world. The chemicals that were synthesized after World War II (including, pesticides, synthetic fragrances, cleaning products, detergents, etc.) are mostly “petro-chemicals” (petroleum based) and are quite toxic to humans. There have been virtually no studies done on the majority of these chemicals to see how they affect humans. The industry just placed the chemicals in the environment with the assumption that they are “safe, till proven toxic”, instead of the other way around. One of the biggest offenders is **PERFUME** and other scented products. Did you know that many of the ingredients in your perfume are the exact same ingredients found in **GASOLINE??!!** The scary thing is that the perfume industry is **NOT REGULATED** at all. They can put any number of chemicals in fragrance without revealing what those chemicals are or how they affect humans.

Some toxic chemicals found in fragrances

Toluene, ethanol, acetone, formaldehyde, limonene, benzene derivatives, ethylene chloride, and many others known to cause cancer, birth defects, infertility, nervous system damage, or other injuries. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) even found chloroform in fabric softeners.

As Romantic as Hazardous Waste

Toluene was found in every fragrance sample collected by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for a 1991 report. "Toluene was most abundant in the auto parts store as well as the fragrance section of the department store." Toluene has been proven to cause cancer and nervous system damage and is designated as hazardous waste.

Not Just in a Perfume Bottle

There is a dramatic increase in people who are made sick by fragrances because so many products are now scented. Babies and children are even more vulnerable, as are people who are trying to recover from cancer and other illnesses.

Chemical fragrances are present in most laundry detergents, fabric softeners, anti-cling products, dishwashing liquids, disinfectants, soaps, shampoos and other hair products, deodorants, cosmetics, suntan/sunscreen lotions, aftershaves, colognes, incense, analgesic creams, and lip balms. Even products marked "unscented" often are falsely labeled and actually contain toxic fragrances.

Perfume Pollutes

Using environmentally safe products is as important as recycling. If everyone stopped buying unsafe, chemically-scented products, companies would stop making them, ending a lot of unnecessary pollution.

Scents and Illness

Exposure to scented products can cause exhaustion, weakness, "hay fever" symptoms, dizziness, difficulty concentrating, headaches, rashes, swollen lymph glands, muscle aches and spasms, heart palpitations, nausea, stomach cramps, vomiting, asthma attacks (inability to breathe), neuromotor dysfunction, seizures, and loss of consciousness.

MCS (Multiple Chemical Sensitivities) is caused by overexposure to toxic chemicals. Even if you don't feel the effects yet, your health is still being damaged, and you will develop MCS or other illnesses if you continue to be exposed to toxic chemicals.

Some Safer Products

Fabric softeners, anti-cling products, disinfectants, other strongly-scented products, and most detergents have toxic ingredients. If you use hair mousse and gels, hairspray or if you chemically process your hair, it will need many washings with a safe shampoo and the passage of time before you can be around someone with MCS without making them ill. What may seem like a mild fragrance to you can be excruciatingly toxic to someone with MCS.

Some safer products are available in local health-food stores or from mail-order stores. Keep in mind that tolerance to a particular product varies from one individual to another. For your convenience a short list of safer products is attached to this document as **Appendix A**. The PSAC does not endorse any of the products found on the list but is providing it as an initial informative tool only.

For More Information

“Multiple Chemical Sensitivity at Work: Guide for PSAC Members”, Publication of the Public Service Alliance of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, (613) 560-5476.

Advocacy Group for the Environmentally Sensitive (AGES), 235 Bay Street, Apt. 808, Ottawa, Ontario, K1R 5Z2, (613) 990-6415.

The Allergy and Environmental Health Association of Canada (AEHA Canada), MIMAC RPO, Box 24030, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, B3A 4T4, (902) 465-2244

Environmental Illness Society of Canada, 256 King Edward Avenue, Suite 330, Ottawa, Ontario, K1N 7M1, (613) 728-9493.

"The New Reactor" - newsletter of The Environmental Health Network, P.O. Box 1155, Larkspur, CA 94977 - (415) 541-5075.

"The Delicate Balance" - newsletter of The National Center for Environmental Strategies, 1100 Rural Avenue, Voorhees, NJ 08043 - (609) 429-5358.

Citizens for a Toxic-Free Marin - Julia Kendall - (415) 485-6870

"Nontoxic, Natural & Earthwise" by Debra Lynn Dadd (Los Angeles: Jeremy P. Tarcher, Inc., 1992). This book lists many safer products for personal and household use.

"Chemical Exposures: Low Levels and High Stakes" by Prof. Nicholas Ashford & Dr. Claudia Miller (Univ. of Texas Health Science Center: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1990).

Special thanks to Jacki Baribeau and Julia Kendall for their support and permission to use their research material. Additional information is also available on the World Wide Web at the following address: <http://www.supernet.net/~jackibar/index.html>

Making Sense of Scents

A FEW TOXICOLOGICAL FACTS ABOUT PERFUMES

"Perfumes are increasingly used in an ever wider variety of fields, including perfumes, cosmetic products, hygienic products, drugs, detergents and other household products, plastics, industrial greases, oils and solvents, foods, etc. Their composition is usually complex. It involves numerous natural and synthetic sweet-smelling constituents, more than 5,000 of which are known. Perfumes may produce toxic and more often allergic respiratory disorders (asthma), as well as neurological and cutaneous disorders." from the French toxicology journal, *Ann Dermatol Vernereol*, Vol 113, ISS 1, 1986, P.31-41.

84% of these ingredients have never been tested for human toxicity and if they have, they were tested only minimally. N. Ashford, Ph.D. and C. Miller, M.D. *Chemical Exposures: Low Levels and High Stakes* 1991, p. 61.

In 1986 the U.S. National Academy of Sciences targeted fragrances as one of the six categories of chemicals that should be given high priority for neurotoxicity testing. The other groups include insecticides, heavy metals, solvents, food additives and certain air pollutants. The report states that 95% of chemicals used in fragrances are synthetic compounds derived from petroleum. They include benzene derivatives, aldehydes, and many other known toxics and sensitizers capable of causing cancers, birth defects, central nervous system disorders and allergic reactions. "Neurotoxins: At Home and the Workplace" (Report by the Committee on Science and Technology. U.S. House of Representatives, Sept. 16, 1986) [Report 99-827]

A few chemicals found in fragrances known to be neurotoxic: hexachlorophene; cetyl-ethyl-tetramethyl-tetralin; zinc-pyridinethione; 2,4,dinitro-3-methyl-6-tert-butylanisole; 1-Butanol; 2-Butanol; tert-Butanol; Isobutanol; t-Butyl Toluene. Neurotoxic properties of chemicals found in fragrances have caused testicular atrophy in lab animals as well as myelin disease. The myelin sheath protects the nerves and does not regenerate. (Compiled from TOXLINE database of fragrances industry and medical journals.)

Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson's, Lupus, and Alzheimer's are all neurological disorders. Dyslexia is a neurological dysfunction. Could any of these neurological dysfunctions be caused by exposure to neurotoxic chemicals? Symptoms are often identical to chemical hypersensitivity. Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is also a neurological dysfunction. Could fragrant fabric softeners or detergents emitting neurotoxic chemicals cause the neurological breakdown?

A few chemicals found in fragrances known to cause cancer and birth defects: methylene chloride; toluene; methyl ethyl ketone; methyl isobutyl ketone; tert Butyl; sec Butyl; benzyl chloride. (Compiled by comparing a list of 120 fragrance chemicals from the EPA obtained through the Freedom of Information Act and California's Prop 65 List of Chemicals).

A few chemicals found in fragrances designated as hazardous waste disposal chemicals: methylene chloride; toluene; methyl ethyl ketone; methyl isobutyl ketone; ethanol; benzal chloride. These chemicals are listed in the EPA's Code 40 of Federal Regulations, Ch 1, Section 261.33.

884 toxic substances were identified in a list (partial) of 2,983 chemicals used in the fragrance industry: "Many of these substances are capable of causing cancer, birth defects, central nervous system disorders, breathing and allergic reactions and Multiple Chemical Sensitivities." (U.S. National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health report.)

In a National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health study conducted by Syracuse Research Corporation, Report No. SRC TR 81-521, 1981, benzoin is named as a chemical used in fragrances found to cause enlarged lymph nodes in both male and female mice and enlarged spleens in males. Liver damage is also cited.

AMICUS journal, Winter '89, U.S. Board of Environmental Studies and Toxicology of the National Research Council, the research branch of the National Academy of Sciences estimates that "15% of the population experiences hypersensitivity to chemicals found in common household products".

U.S. National Institute of Health, "Issues and Challenges in Environmental Health," NIH Pub. #87-861..."allergic reactions and hypersensitivity diseases, for instance, are among the most costly of U.S. health problems afflicting at least 35,000,000 Americans".

Article "One Woman's Perfume - Another Woman's Poison", in "Let's Live": "The chief reactions we see are those that affect the nervous system: headaches, anxiety, depression. But anything can be affected, even diet and a personal intolerance for different foods. There are two major ways in which cosmetics and their chemical constituents can affect the body. One is through direct contact. Inhalation is the other major route for molecules of an active substance to enter the blood stream. "There is a route from the nasal passage into the nervous system," says Mandell... "It is the way, for instance, that inhaled cocaine has an effect on the brain."

ASTHMA AND FRAGRANCE CHEMICALS

Toluene was detected in every fragrance sample collected by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for a report in 1991: "Toluene was most abundant in the auto parts store, as well as the fragrance sections of the department store."

Toluene not only triggers asthma attacks, it is known to cause asthma in previously healthy people. According to "Air Currents", publication of Allen and Handsbury's Respiratory Institute, division of Glaxo, Inc., asthma has increased in the past decade by 31%, and in the same period asthma deaths have increased by 31%. Women and those over 65 suffer the highest death rate for asthma.

72% of asthma patients in a study have adverse reactions to perfumes; i.e., pulmonary function tests dropping anywhere between 18% and 58% below baseline (from "Affects of Odors in Asthma," Chang Shim, MD and M. Henry

Toluene-laced fragrance industry chemical products have become increasingly pervasive in the last ten years. They are used not only in perfumes, but also in furniture wax, tires, plastic garbage bags, inks, hair gel, hairspray, and kitty litter. A Danish toxicological journal, "Ugeskr Laegar", Vol 153, ISS 13, 1991, p. 939-40, found perfume in kitty litter to be the cause of asthma in humans.

SYMPTOMS PROVOKED BY FRAGRANCES

Watery or dry eyes, double vision, sneezing, nasal congestion, sinusitis, tinnitus, ear pain, dizziness, vertigo, coughing, bronchitis, difficulty breathing, difficulty swallowing, asthma, anaphylaxis, headaches, seizures, fatigue, confusion, disorientation, incoherence, short-term memory loss, inability to concentrate, nausea, lethargy, anxiety, irritability, depression, mood swings, restlessness, rashes, hives, eczema, flushing, muscle and joint pain, muscle weakness, irregular heart beat, hypertension, swollen lymph glands, and more. (Candida Research and Information Foundation, Perfume Survey, Winter 1989-90)

NO REGULATION OF FRAGRANCE INDUSTRY TO PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH

In Canada, there is no, federal, provincial or territorial agency or department regulating the fragrance industry (exemption because of trade secrets). Canadian research on the toxicology of perfumes or scents is inexistant.

In the U.S., no agency regulates the fragrance industry. According to John Baily, Phd, Director, Colors and Cosmetics, U.S. Food and Drug Agency (FDA), "The fragrance and cosmetic industry is the least-regulated industry. There is no pre-clearing of chemicals with any agency."

The U.S. FDA has suggested the best method "to protect sufferers from odor sensitivities might be to curtail odor exposures under specific circumstances through local or state regulatory action."

RIGHT TO BREATHE FRESH AIR

James Cone, MD, MPH, a Berkeley-based indoor air quality consultant and former Chief of Occupational Health Clinic, San Francisco General Hospital, in "Indoor Air Odorants" identifies physiological pathways of entry of synthetic fragrance molecules, naming them as one of five major contributors to indoor air pollution and then recommends a regulation be adopted to govern indoor air

quality where specific point sources can be identified. "No person shall discharge from any source whatsoever such quantities of air contaminants or other material which cause injury, detriment, nuisance or annoyance to a considerable number of persons or to the public, or which endanger the comfort, repose, health or safety of any such persons or the public, or which cause, or have a natural tendency to cause, injury or damage to business or property."

THE U.S. LAW

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992 guarantees access of disabled to institutions, such as government agencies, libraries, doctor's offices, retail stores, and many others. Multiple Chemical Sensitivity/Environmental Illness (MCS/EI) is recognized as a disability by The Social Security Administration and The Department of Housing and Urban Development. Fragrances are a "barrier to access" to MCS/EI disabled, since breathing is affected. Breathing is a "major life activity" as defined by the ADA. Fragrance bans meet the "reasonable accommodation" clause of the ADA, since elimination and substitution are not expensive.

U.S. Postal Regulations, Domestic Mail Manual, 124.395 Fragrance Advertising Samples (39 USC 3001 (g) April 1990), states that fragrance strips for mailing "cannot be activated except by opening a glued flap or binder or by removing an overlying ply of paper."

California AB 2709 (as of January 1, 1992) states that "fragrances contained in any newspaper, magazine, or other periodically-printed material, published or offered for sale, or contained in any advertisement (mailed or otherwise distributed) shall be enclosed in a sealant sufficient to protect a consumer from inadvertent exposure to the cosmetic including, but not limited to, the inadvertent inhalation thereof."

THE CANADIAN LAW

Protection similar to the U.S. is not available in Canada. The Canadian Human Rights Commission has never addressed in any of their decisions an issue involving guaranteed access to public buildings for persons with disabilities who suffer from MCS/EI. No similar postal regulation exist or any other federal, provincial or territorial safeguards against this type of environmental pollution.

WORKPLACE AND GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Some employers, in an attempt to minimize workplace exposure to perfumes and other scented products, have endorsed workplace policies. Although only a very few number of employers have endorsed scent-free policies, they are a good tool that not only limits contamination of the indoor air quality but also increases awareness of workers on the issue of chemical sensitivities and environmental illness.

What was first an attempt to accommodate in the workplace a chemically sensitive worker is now being done to reduce workplace exposure to perfumes and scented products for all workers. Even the province of Nova Scotia is establishing a scent-free environment in public buildings. The scent-free movement in that province has spread through hospitals, schools, churches, restaurants and public transportation. There are no bylaws backing the campaign yet, but it seems to be gaining momentum.

You will find in **Appendix B**, examples of two workplace scent-free employer policies. The first one is from Health Canada and the other is from Industry Canada.

You will also find in **Appendix C**, two interesting articles from the Ottawa Citizen of Sunday, March 16, 1997. The first article reports on a project that includes building a new Environmental Health Centre and the second reports on the public campaign in Nova Scotia to establish scent-free environment in public buildings and transportation.

Appendix D contains examples of posters.

Note: the “skunk” poster cannot be reproduced, however, copies can be obtained by calling the telephone number mentioned on the poster.

PSAC BOOKLET AND VIDEO

Booklet:

The PSAC has published a booklet on *Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) at Work (1997)*. It is an information guide to assist members suffering from MCS.

Video:

The PSAC video *“It’s Not in Your Head”* is available through the Regional Offices. This video offers information on the complexities of MCS and on how to assist affected members. The video can be shown on its own or as part of a module on MCS.

The Health Risks of Twenty Most Common Chemicals Found in Thirty-One Fragrance Products. (By a 1991 EPA Study)

*Compiled by Julia Kendall, Co-Chair, Citizens for a Toxic-Free Marin; Phone: (415) 485-6870
Reference: Lance Wallace, Environmental Protection Agency; Phone: (703) 341-7509
Excerpts from "Health Hazard Information"
References: Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)*

PRINCIPAL CHEMICALS FOUND IN SCENTED PRODUCTS

ACETONE (In: cologne, dishwashing liquid and detergent, nail enamel remover). On EPA, RCRA, CERCLA Hazardous Waste lists. "Inhalation can cause dryness of the mouth and throat; dizziness, nausea, incoordination, slurred speech, drowsiness, and, in severe exposures, coma". "Acts primarily as a central nervous system (CNS) depressant".

BENZALDEHYDE (In: perfume, cologne, hairspray, laundry bleach, deodorants, detergent, vaseline lotion, shaving cream, shampoo, bar soap, dishwasher detergent). Narcotic and sensitizer. "Local anesthetic, CNS depressant". "Irritation to the mouth, throat, eyes, skin, lungs, and GI tract, causing nausea and abdominal pain". "May cause kidney damage". "Do not use with contact lenses".

BENZYL ACETATE (In: perfume, cologne, shampoo, fabric softener, stickup air fresheners, dishwashing liquid and detergent, soap, hairspray, bleach, after shave, deodorants). Carcinogenic (linked to pancreatic cancer). "From vapors: irritating to eyes and respiratory passages, exciting cough". "In mice: hyperanemia of the lungs". "Can be absorbed through the skin causing systemic effects". "Do not flush to sewer".

BENZYL ALCOHOL (In: perfume, cologne, soap, shampoo, nail enamel remover, air fresheners, laundry bleach and detergent, vaseline lotion, deodorants, fabric softener). "Irritating to the upper respiratory tract". "Headache, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, drop in blood pressure, CNS depression, and death in severe cases due to respiratory failure".

CAMPHOR (In: perfume, shaving cream, nail enamel, fabric softener, dishwasher detergent, nail color, stickup air fresheners). "Local irritant and CNS stimulant". "Readily absorbed through body tissues". "Irritation of eyes, nose and throat". "Dizziness, confusion, nausea, twitching muscles and convulsions". "Avoid inhalation of vapors".

ETHANOL (In: perfume, hairspray, shampoo, fabric softener, dishwashing liquid and detergent, laundry detergent, shaving cream, soap, vaseline lotion, air fresheners, nail color and remover, paint and varnish remover). On EPA Hazardous Waste list; symptoms: "...fatigue; irritating to eyes and upper respiratory tract even in low concentrations...". "Inhalation of ethanol vapors can have effects similar to those characteristic of ingestion. These include an initial stimulatory effect followed by drowsiness, impaired vision, ataxia, stupor...". Causes CNS disorder.

ETHYL ACETATE (In: after shave, cologne, perfume, shampoo, nail color, nail enamel remover, fabric softener, dishwashing liquid). Narcotic. On EPA Hazardous Waste list. "Irritating to the eyes and respiratory tract". "May cause headache and narcosis (stupor)". "Defatting effect on skin and may cause drying and cracking". "May cause anemia with leukocytosis and damage to liver and kidneys". "Wash thoroughly after handling".

LIMONENE (In: perfume, cologne, disinfectant spray, bar soap, shaving cream, deodorants, nail color and remover, fabric softener, dishwashing liquid, air fresheners, after shave, bleach, paint and varnish remover). Carcinogenic. "Prevent its contact with skin or eyes because it is an irritant and sensitizer". "Always wash thoroughly after using this material and before eating, drinking, ...applying cosmetics. Do not inhale limonene vapor".

LINALOOL (In: perfume, cologne, bar soap, shampoo, hand lotion, nail enamel remover, hairspray, laundry detergent, dishwashing liquid, vaseline lotion, air fresheners, bleach powder, fabric softener, shaving cream, after shave, solid deodorant). Narcotic. "Respiratory disturbances". "Attracts bees". "In animal tests: ataxic gait, reduced spontaneous motor activity and depression ... development of respiratory disturbances leading to death". "Depressed frog-heart activity". Causes CNS disorder.

METHYLENE CHLORIDE (In: shampoo, cologne, paint and varnish remover). Banned by the FDA in 1988! No enforcement possible due to trade secret laws protecting chemical fragrance industry. On EPA, RCRA, CERCLA Hazardous Waste lists. "Carcinogenic". "Absorbed, stored in body fat, it metabolizes to carbon monoxide, reducing oxygen-carrying capacity of the blood". "Headache, giddiness, stupor, irritability, fatigue, tingling in the limbs". Causes CNS disorder.

α-PINENE (In: bar and liquid soap, cologne, perfume, shaving cream, deodorants, dishwashing liquid, air fresheners). Sensitizer (damaging to the immune system).

γ-TERPINENE (In: cologne, perfume, soap, shaving cream, deodorant, air fresheners). "Causes asthma and CNS disorders".

α-TERPINEOL (In: perfume, cologne, laundry detergent, bleach powder, laundry bleach, fabric softener, stickup air fresheners, vaseline lotion, cologne, soap, hairspray, after shave, roll-on deodorant). "Highly irritating to mucous membranes". "Aspiration into the lungs can produce pneumonitis or even fatal edema". Can also cause "excitement, ataxia (loss of muscular coordination), hypothermia, CNS and respiratory depression, and headache". "Prevent repeated or prolonged skin contact".

Unable to secure MSDS for the following chemicals: 1,8-CINEOLE; β-CITRONELLOL; β-MYRCENE; NEROL; OCIMENE; β-PHENETHYL ALCOHOL; α-TERPINOLENE.

RELEVANT FACTS

⚡# Of chemicals used in fragrances, 95% are synthetic compounds derived from petroleum. They include benzene derivatives, aldehydes and many other known toxics and sensitizers capable of causing cancer, birth defects, central nervous system disorders and allergic reactions. (Neurotoxins: At Home and the Workplace, Report by the Committee on Science & Technology, U.S. House of Representatives, Sept. 16, 1986, Report 99-827)

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⚡# Central Nervous System disorders (brain and spine) include Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson's Disease, Alzheimer's Disease, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

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⚡# Chloroform was found in tests of fabric softeners (EPA's 1991 study)

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⚡# A room containing an air freshener had high levels of p-dichlorobenzene (a carcinogen) and ethanol (EPA's 1991 study)

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⚡# An FDA analysis (1968-1972) of 138 compounds used in cosmetics that most frequently involved adverse reactions, identified five chemicals (alpha-terpineol, benzyl acetate, benzyl alcohol, limonene and linalool) that are among the 20 most commonly used in the 31 fragrance products tested by the EPA in 1991!

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⚡# Thirty-three million Americans suffer from sinusitis (inflammation or infection of sinus passages). It is estimated that three million Canadians suffer from sinusitis.

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⚡# Asthma is one of the most prevalent chronic conditions in Canada. More than one million Canadians of all ages suffer from asthma, resulting in more than 60,000 hospital admissions and 280,000 days in hospital annually.

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⚡# Ten million Americans have asthma. Asthma and asthma-related deaths have increased over 30% in the past 10 years.

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⚡# Headaches cost \$50 billion in lost productivity and medical expenses and 157 million lost work days in 1991 in the U.S. "Focus on Fragrance and Health," by Louise Kosta, The Human Ecologist, Fall 1992.

APPENDIX A

LIST OF SAFER PRODUCTS

SOAPS

- ⌘ Sirena Coconut Soap, Unscented
- ⌘ Dr. Bronner's Unscented Baby Castile
- ⌘ Conti Castile Soap
- ⌘ Kiss my Face Pure Olive Oil Soap, Unscented
- ⌘ Nature Clean Pure Vegetable Soap
- ⌘ Gardener's Soap with Loofah
- ⌘ Goat's Milk Soap
- ⌘ Skin Kind Organics Irish Moss Soap
- ⌘ Skin Kind Organics Kelp Meal Scrubbing Soap

SHAMPOOS

- ⌘ Pure Essentials Fragrance-Free Shampoo
- ⌘ Granny's Rich'n Radiant Shampoo
- ⌘ Dr. Bronner's Unscented Baby Castile
- ⌘ All Ways Indian Hemp Shampoo
- ⌘ Nature Clean Herbal Shampoo
- ⌘ Skin Kind Organics Irish Moss or Kelp Shampoo

LAUNDRY AND DISHWASHING

- ⌘ Plain baking soda
- ⌘ Dr. Bronner's Unscented Baby Castile
- ⌘ Granny's Old Fashioned Concentrate
- ⌘ Country Save Unscented
- ⌘ Plain borax
- ⌘ Nature Clean Dishwashing Powder
- ⌘ Down East Homecare Products
 - Ⓞ All Purpose Cleaner
 - Ⓞ Liquid Laundry Detergent
 - Ⓞ Scouring Powder

Ⓒ# Dishwashing Liquid

DEODORANT

Ⓒ# Deodorant Stones

Ⓒ# Tom's Natural Deodorant Stick

LOTIONS

Ⓒ# Plain almond oil or olive oil

Ⓒ# Granny's Old Fashioned Moisture Guard

Ⓒ# Nature's Plus Vitamin E Cream

Ⓒ# Cocoa butter, plain or with almond oil only

SUNSCREENS

Ⓒ# Mountain Ocean Sun Screen, SPF 15

Ⓒ# Physician's Formula

Ⓒ# Nature's Gate Lip Balm, SPF 15 (UVA+ UVB)

(The PSAC does not endorse any of these commercial products)

APPENDIX B

Example of an employer policy/advisory

Environmental Sensitivities Chemicals and Perfumes in the Workplace

**Health and Safety Advisory:
Health, Safety and Security Division
Health Canada**

**Done in conjunction with the Departmental
Occupational Safety and Health Advisory Committee**

May 1997

To: All Notes User/Tous les Usagers de Notes
cc:
Subject: Environmental Sensitivities - Chemicals and Perfumes in the Workplace/Manifestations d'intolérances au milieu - Produit chimiques et parfums en milieu de travail

HEALTH & SAFETY ADVISORY:

**Environmental Sensitivities - Chemicals
and Perfumes in the Workplace**

a message from the
Health, Safety & Security Division
Assets Management Directorate, CSB

Concerns continue to be raised about employee sensitivities resulting from the use of chemicals and perfumes in the workplace. Accordingly, the Departmental Occupational Safety and Health Advisory Committee has decided to reissue this advisory with further updates.

Indoor air quality is not just about dust and building air ventilation systems. The air we are exposed to also contains substances which can be irritating and potentially hazardous to many of us, chemicals that we may not think twice about.

Chemicals, including those found in many scented products used everyday, can seriously affect our co-workers, especially those who suffer from environmental sensitivities, allergies, or asthma. Products such as office cleaning solutions, strong perfumes, hairsprays or aftershave lotions can provoke a reaction ranging from mild to serious in some people.

Some of us are reluctant to speak up on our own behalf. We may not even be aware of the substances and chemicals being used around us or of the potential effects of scented products (or combination of products) may have on us.

We all share the air. The following tips can be used to help address environmental sensitivities.

⚡ Avoid using scented products, such as perfumes, aftershave lotions and hairsprays;

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⚡ Use odourless products to clean and freshen your office area. Read product labels and be informed. Refer to the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) labels for more details. If you require further information, do not hesitate to contact your Occupational Safety and Health Committee (OSH) representative;

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⚡ If the cleaning solutions, washroom air fresheners and other products used by the building maintenance workers affect you, call your local Facilities Manager or contact your OSH representative;

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⚡ Replace regular permanent markers with an odourless type. Substitute strongly scented cleaning solutions with unscented, environment-friendly products. Fumes from marker pens or cleaning products can cause headaches and nausea, especially in an enclosed area such as a boardroom;

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⚡ Ensure all products which have odours, such as photocopier cartridges, are tightly sealed and properly stored;

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⚡ Eliminate sources of dampness, such as overwatered plants, humidifiers, or coffee spills. Dampness encourages the growth of mold which can cause unpleasant odours and trigger allergic reactions in some people;

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⚡ Take care of your plants, and don't treat them with chemicals in the work environment. Flowering plants are not advisable because some employees may be allergic to them;

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⚡ Ensure that printer filters are replaced when suggested by the manufacturer.

Air quality can also be affected by other minor problems that can be easily avoided if we work together. Listed below are some additional common sense actions that might apply at your work location.

- ⊘ Turn off computers, free-standing printers and lights when not in use. This helps to keep the building cool and also saves energy;**
- ⊘ Do not block the air vents in window bays with books, files or plants. This causes the air flow to be restricted resulting in reduced comfort levels;**
- ⊘ Have your filing cabinets or other furniture moved away from heating/cooling units to allow for optimal air flow;**
- #**
- ⊘ Keep your office door open, whenever possible, to assist the heating and ventilation system to function properly. Share the air flow with your colleagues located in the inside offices;**
- #**
- ⊘ Never adjust thermostats. They may control the heat in workplaces other than yours, and could affect the comfort of your colleagues. If you feel too hot or too cold, call your local Facilities Manager;**
- #**
- ⊘ Request that photocopiers and other office equipment be placed in well ventilated areas;**
- #**
- ⊘ Think of your colleagues: no-one appreciates the smell of gym clothes or damp boots, which could produce strong odours;**
- #**
- ⊘ Periodically clean and tidy up your workstation. This will help to reduce dust and make your work environment much safer.**

If you have allergies or sensitivities, let others around you know of your health concerns. If you are aware of someone who is sensitive, be considerate and try to avoid using the substances which might trigger a negative reaction.

It's a team effort. By applying these common-sense principles we can do our part in improving air quality in our work environment. Together we can make a difference.

Enquiries may be directed to your Occupational Safety and Health Committee (OSH) representative or Mirella De Marinis, Health, Safety and Security, (613) 957-4182.

Example of an employer policy/advisory

Environmental Sensitivities Chemicals and Perfumes in the Workplace

Industry Canada

**LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, PLEASE...
YOUR SCENTS ARE MAKING US SICK!**

Believe it... perfumes, colognes and other scented toiletries have entered the growing list of air pollutants because they actually make some people ill. That doesn't mean the odour is offensive; it means these products can cause adverse physical reactions such as nausea, headaches, difficulty breathing, laryngitis and rashes. In other words, some people are severely allergic to what we are wearing and, because they work with us, they can't escape!

Yes, these people are few in number right now but their numbers are growing daily. All of us are constantly exposed to the pollutants we are pouring into the environment and many people are being sensitized to these substances and developing allergies that were unheard of years ago. If you think this will never happen to you, think again....most environmentally sensitive people were perfectly normal and healthy until their reactions came "out of nowhere" and, for some, have become so severe that they must lead frustratingly restricted lives.

In consideration for the health of our colleagues who may suffer from environmental sensitivities, and, in self-interest to eliminate a contaminant from the air that could make any one of us "healthy specimens" ill some day, please consider using unscented toiletries and minimizing or even eliminating your use of perfumes and colognes at work.

APPENDIX C

Nova Scotia builds a haven for the environmentally sensitive

BY GRAEME HAMILTON
The Ottawa Citizen
Halifax

It must have been a shock for the workers hired to build Nova Scotia's new Environmental Health Centre when they got their instructions. They were used to being reminded to wear hard hats and safety boots. But advice on deodorant?

Designers of the \$2.3-million research and treatment facility for environmental illness took unprecedented precautions to keep the building free of contaminants. Workers were barred from wearing "aromatic personal-care products," and smoking was out of the question. No garbage was stored on site, and only electric power tools were used to prevent hydrocarbon emissions. Some building materials were even rejected because of the hand cream worn by the delivery person.

Described as the first clinic of its kind in Canada, the government-funded centre opens early next month in a lakeside community of Fall River, just outside Halifax. Construction is complete, and the building is in the final stage before patients arrive — a three-week airing-out.

The project has been criticized as an extravagance by skeptics who believe the patients' problems are mostly in their heads. But with the backing of the provincial health department and Dalhousie University's medical school, the centre's opening will be a landmark in the emerging field of environmental illness.

Dr. Roy Fox, director of the centre and a professor at Dalhousie, said studies conducted in the centre's untainted environment should help clear



SOUTHAM NEWS

Dr. Roy Fox says he was stricken by a mysterious ailment in a Halifax hospital in 1991

up confusion about environmental illness and silence the critics.

"Overwhelmingly, the majority of physicians accept that we do have people with serious health concerns, which we don't really understand at present," Fox said. "As a result, they're not being treated that well."

The centre's literature describes environmental illness as a chronic condition caused by one-time or prolonged exposure to a variety of substances, including molds, pesticides, cleaning supplies and other chemicals. It can interfere with the patient's neurological, respiratory, immune or musculoskeletal systems, and subsequent exposures — even at very low doses — can aggravate the condition. Symptoms range from a runny nose and irritated eyes to fatigue, skin rash-

es and behaviour problems.

The illness is "a critical public health problem in Nova Scotia," the centre says, and the problem appears to be growing as people are exposed to more and more toxins. About 650 people, ranging from infants to people in their 70s, are being seen at a temporary clinic that Dalhousie established in 1994. The waiting list is at 1,150 and growing.

Awareness of environmental illness in Nova Scotia, particularly among the medical community, was raised by the outbreak of a mysterious ailment in Halifax's Camp Hill Hospital in 1991. At one point, 300 staff members were off sick, and the problem was eventually linked to poor air quality.

Dr. Fox was among those stricken, and he says he still can't set foot in the hospital. Frustration with the inability to diagnose and treat their illness led some of the sufferers to seek help at an environmental health clinic in Dallas. Gradually, the practices of the Dallas clinic began making their way back up to Nova Scotia.

A Dalhousie medical school committee investigated the subject and recommended the creation of a research centre in Nova Scotia. The province agreed to foot the bill.

John Ruedy, dean of medicine at Dalhousie, sees environmental illness as a challenge beyond the scope of traditional medical training, which stresses the diagnosis of a disease.

With environmental illness, it's not so clear-cut. "The physician has to say, 'I honestly don't know what's going on,'" Mr. Ruedy said. He has encouraged opposition from some senior faculty who are convinced environmental illness is psychological, not bi-

ological. But he believes Dalhousie will become a national leader in environmental illness research.

The skepticism about the disorder is typified by the provincial Workers' Compensation Board, which has refused to cover many therapies used to treat environmental illness.

Dr. Merv Shaw, medical administrator for the board, said the condition has still not been accepted as "a bona fide" disease by the medical community.

"How does being sensitive to one substance cause you to be sensitive to a multitude of substances, at extremely low doses?" he said. "When it can be shown scientifically that it does exist, then the board would have to re-evaluate its position."

The painstaking attention to eliminating contaminants in the new facility serves a dual purpose. It will be a relief to patients who sometimes break out in hives just sitting in a doctor's waiting room. And it will minimize background interference as researchers test therapies such as intravenous mineral supplements and strive to understand what might trigger a person's symptoms.

Once the centre opens, access will be limited. Patients won't stay overnight, so there will be no visitors. Even the politicians who funded the project won't get a tour. Patients will be advised not to wear scents during visits, but just in case, they will be greeted at the door with a polite sniff.

"We will know what they smell like as they walk through," Dr. Fox said. "If you're working in a clean environment, you can smell other things very easily."

Scent-free advocates smell success

Raising a stink: A number of public buildings have banned artificial scents.

The Ottawa Citizen

HALIFAX — Robin Barrett's first concern when called for jury duty about a year ago was how the court would smell. Perfume makes the Halifax air-quality consultant fuzzy-headed, and he asked whether the courthouse could provide a scent-free environment.

"Their response was to drop my name from the list. I was disappointed because it would have been interesting to sit on a jury."

Now, Mr. Barrett might just get that chance. The Halifax Law Courts announced last October that it was joining a growing number of public buildings in Nova Scotia that have banned artificial scents. The move was made

for the benefit of workers and some judges who had trouble working when perfume wafted through the air.

The scent-free movement has spread through hospitals, schools, churches and restaurants. There are no bylaws backing the campaign yet, but it seems to be gaining momentum. Transit drivers in Halifax have been told to kick the fragrance habit, and one driver even ordered a heavily perfumed woman off his bus in 1995. Radio announcements of upcoming events often end with the reminder: "Please come scent-free."

Rose Featherstone, national secretary of the Allergy and Environmental Health Association, said Nova Scotia is leading the country in the drive to rid public spaces of noxious scents.

The association's magazine features a regular update of dozens of "scent-free sites" reported by readers, and the vast majority are in Nova Scotia.

The campaign has increased awareness of the suffering that scented products cause people with chemical sensitivities. But the challenge is daunting.

It's not just perfumes and colognes that cause problems. There are deodorants, shampoos and detergents, too. Some commercial products advertised as unscented actually contain traces of artificial scents, enough to bother some with chemical sensitivity.

One local newspaper columnist complained of the creation of a "perfume police state" after she got dirty looks when she attended a scent-free

meeting soon after washing her hair. "Will it be illegal to get on a bus with garlic on your breath?" Sandra Porteous wrote. "How long before restaurants will be asked to sell odourless food for the faint-hearted?"

Helen Lofgren, head of the Nova Scotia chapter of the Allergy and Environmental Health Association, likened the campaign against scents to the fight for non-smokers' rights.

She said it was only after people got a taste of what a non-smoking environment was like that they realized how much the smoke had been bothering them. "It's a matter of awareness. Now it's recognized that you can't pollute other people's air."

Citizen/Southern National Bureau

APPENDIX D

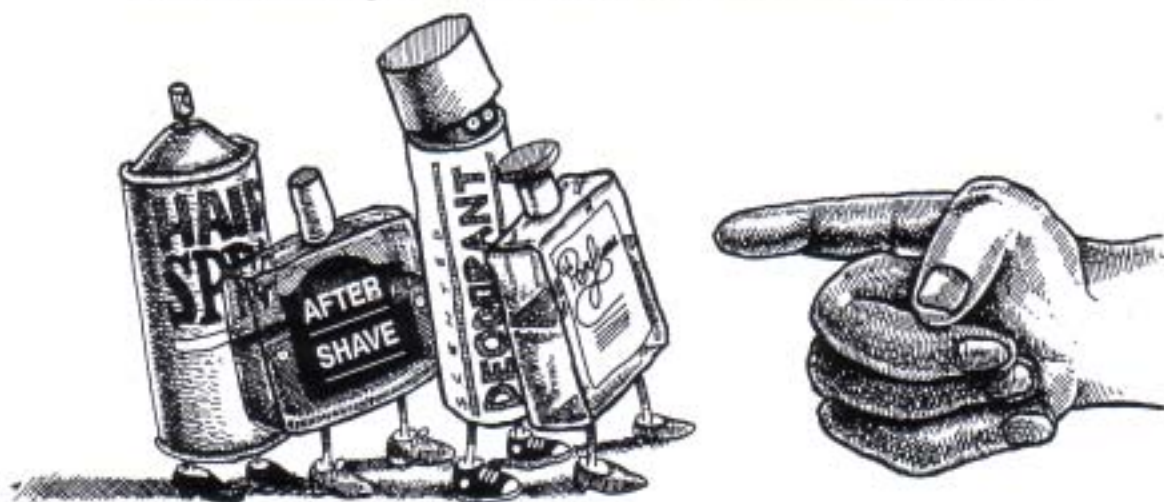
SCENT-FREE ZONE



(Seulement disponible en anglais)

NO SCENTS IS GOOD SENSE

Please do not wear perfume, scented hairspray, cologne, scented deodorant, aftershave or other scented products.



Many non-scented alternatives are available. Scented products contain chemicals which cause serious problems for many people, especially those with asthma, allergies and environmental illness. Wearing **perfume, scented hairspray, cologne, scented deodorant, aftershave** and other similar products may make you feel good, but knowing how it affects others, *you'll feel even better leaving home without them.* After all, feeling better is what we're all about.

A Message from the Nova Scotia Nurses' Union and Camp Hill Medical Centre.

(Seulement disponible en anglais)



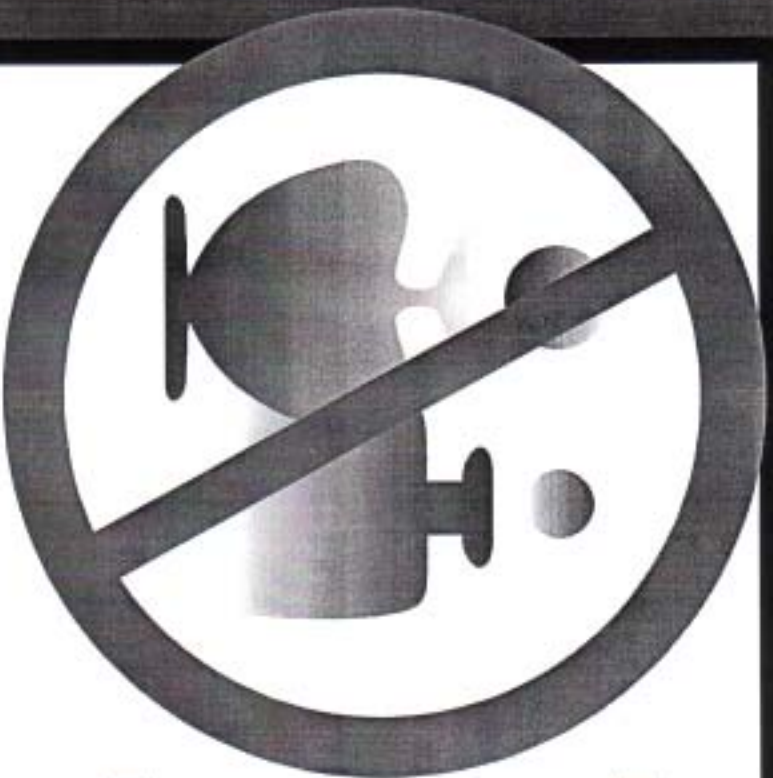
PSAC Regional Health &
Safety Conference



Please refrain from using scents.

*Some members may be sensitive to
perfumes and aftershave/colognes.*

Thank you for cooperation.



Please be aware that many members are sensitive to chemicals, including those found in scents, perfumes and aftershaves.

PLEASE LIMIT YOUR USE OF SCENTS DURING CONVENTION WEEK.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!