

Personal Scented Product		
Effective Date: May 2016	Replaces Date:	EHSS to review: May 2019

1. Introduction

Red River College is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all members of the College community. In accordance with this document, members of the College community are encouraged to refrain from the use of personal scented products while on College campuses and when involved in College related activity.

Further information contained below is intended to:

- a. Increase awareness of the need to eliminate the use of personal scented products because of the possible impact of these products on the health and safety of others.
- b. Provide guidance for the management of personal scent related concerns at RRC.

2. What are personal scented products?

Under the Canada Food and Drugs Act, cosmetics are defined as “any substance or mixture of substances manufactured, sold or represented for use in cleaning, improving or altering the complexion, skin, hair or teeth, and include deodorants and, perfumes and colognes.” (link: [Food and Drug Act, Cosmetics Definition](#)).

3. What is the concern with personal scented products?

- a. Exposure to perfumes and other products can trigger health reactions in persons with asthma, allergies, compromised immune systems, migraines, or chemical sensitivities.
- b. Individuals with these pre-existing conditions when exposed to some odours can cause a range of ill health effects. Some reported symptoms include: headache, dizziness, lightheadedness, nausea, fatigue, weakness, insomnia, malaise, confusion, loss of appetite, depression, anxiety, numbness, upper respiratory symptoms, shortness of breath, difficulty concentrating and /or skin irritation.
- c. While the user of the product can control the type of product that they wear, it is more difficult to control who in the College is exposed.

4. What can I do when a co-worker in my department is wearing a scented product that is causing problems?

- a. Approach your co-worker discretely and explain how scents affect your health. Talk to the individual in a cordial and respectful manner. Ask for his/her cooperation and understanding while stressing that the product and not the person is the concern.
- b. If the above is not possible or if you do not feel comfortable having this type of conversation, inform your supervisor of your health issues, sensitivities, symptoms and the types of exposure that improve or worsen these symptoms.
- c. If necessary, report to the College Health Centre HM-08 or by telephone at 204-632-2358. Further, consult with your physician.
- d. If the concern is not resolved, contact Human Resource Services, Environmental Health and Safety Services or one of the College Joint Workplace Safety and Health Committees.

5. What if I am approached about a scented product I am wearing?

- a. Do not take offence – this request is about the impact of chemicals on people and not about you.
- b. Listen to your co-worker and ask questions. Find out whether your co-worker is more concerned about the type of product or the amount you wear. Discuss the issue openly.
- c. If necessary, contact your supervisor to be part of the conversation.

6. What can I do as a supervisor?

- a. Advise employees and students about this guideline prior to a concern or problem being raised.
- b. When a concern is brought forward, managers and supervisors should listen to and be sensitive to employee's concerns related to scented products. Be aware that some concerns may be indicators of other air quality problems. Others may relate primarily to minor discomfort and if so, education, awareness, and co-operation by all employees will likely resolve the issue.
- c. Refer those issues which cannot be resolved to RRC Human Resource Services, Environmental Health and Safety Services or the College Joint Workplace Safety and Health Committees.

7. What can College departments do to assist?

- a. Use and distribute College educational materials on this topic, including posters. Contact safety@rrc.ca for copies of the posters.
- b. Include the following statement on invitations, orientations and other College documents.

“RRC is a scent sensitive environment. Please refrain from using personal scented products.”