

NEWS FROM ONFCI
THE OHIO NETWORK FOR THE CHEMICALLY INJURED

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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ONFCI URGES ADOPTION OF CDC
FRAGRANCE-FREE POLICY TO PROTECT HEALTH

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is on record affirming that some building conditions have the “potential to adversely impact the health of building occupants. Potential hazards include chemicals, biological agents, fragrant products, and physical conditions that may cause irritation, illness, or exacerbate existing health conditions.”

The CDC’s June 2009 internal Indoor Environmental Quality Policy protects employees from many harmful health effects by: controlling VOC emissions that are found in many buildings and commercial products; using integrated pest management to ensure the least possible hazard to people, property, and the environment; utilizing a safety official with qualifications to assess indoor air quality; using biodegradable, low toxicity, fragrance-free cleaning products; and other preventive measures.

In conjunction with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) Awareness and Education Month during May, the Ohio Network for the Chemically Injured (ONFCI), a not-for-profit corporation that educates about and advocates on behalf of those who have been harmed by toxic chemicals in our everyday environment, urges all employers, businesses, and homeowners to review and adopt the CDC policy in order to reduce illness, disease, and disability.

Readily achievable policies include prohibiting the use of any air fresheners, air wicks, plug-ins, incense, candles, reed diffusers, fragrance-emitting devices of any kind, plug-in or spray air fresheners, and toilet blocks. Encourage fragrance-free personal care and laundry products and request employees to be as fragrance-free as possible. The CDC Policy prohibits

applying personal care scented products on any CDC premises. The use of “green” cleaning chemicals and building materials along with monitoring for appropriate ventilation will not only reduce indoor air contamination, but will reduce employee absenteeism as well.

In a letter to Governor Strickland, Senator Dale Miller asked for the Governor’s “... consideration to develop and put forward an Indoor Environmental Quality Policy for use in all state facilities. The model proposed by the Centers for Disease Control would be an excellent starting place for development of this policy. We need to make every effort to provide work environments that are clean, comfortable, and safe. We also should pay particular attention to protecting those who are particularly sensitive to chemical irritants.”

Cuyahoga County Public Library’s 28 branches and their administrative office building will participate in MCS Awareness Month. Some branches will display related books and provide other information. A copy of the CDC Policy will be available for copying. The Downtown branch of Cleveland Public Library will again have an MCS Awareness Month display in the Science and Technology Department.

Many mayors including Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson, Berea Mayor Cyril Kleem, and Strongsville Mayor Thomas Perciak, will again issue Proclamations supporting MCS Awareness and Education Month in May.

An MCS article appears in the 2010 Environmental Briefing Book on the Ohio Environmental Council’s website. <http://www.theoec.org/LobbyDay2010.htm> . For further information about MCS and the ONFCI visit our website at www.ohionetwork.org or contact ONFCI at (440) 845-1888.

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