

Hello,

Please consider bringing up this issue to the Disability Right Commission. I do not know how the City makes their policies for public buildings/spaces. I'm hoping that perhaps the commission or the City Council can take up the issue.

Does the City of Madison have a policy regarding use of air fresheners in public City owned or rented buildings? Such as public restrooms at the libraries?

I have a health condition called Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) and am very sensitive to fragranced products, people, and air spaces. My sense of smell is amplified 100 times that of a 'normal' person. Upon one whiff of a scent or odor, my sinuses go into high gear resulting in me not being able to breathe. Unfortunately once the sinuses are clogged, they can't be unclogged for several days. This results in me getting migraines. Typically I'm out of commission for a few days.

Goodman Library (south branch) has an automatic air freshener dispenser in the restrooms. Upon discovery, I turned around and chose not to use the restrooms there. On other occasions, I've had no choice but to use them but I suffer the consequences later. I try to hold my breath but I usually can't hold it that long.

I used to work for the university but due to continued air freshener use in my office suite, I finally had to resign the fact that I would continue to get sick as people continued to act against my ADA accommodation requests to stop the practice. I finally gave up and resigned from my position. Companies/universities/ state and local governments talk about equity and being inclusive but how can they be inclusive when others are purposely making others sick? (I still can not understand how my coworkers could use products in the office suite we shared knowing that it was making me ill? What kind of people do that? Faculty and other staff members purposely chose to be fragranced despite knowing it would cause me great harm and that I'd be out sick more often.). The use of the air fresheners was the one thing I could not avoid in my work space.

This is an accessibility issue. MCS is recognized as being a disability by the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act). Please be aware that there is a segment of the population that can't use these public restrooms or public buildings due to these devices/ products.

The CDC enacted policies with regard to air fresheners and scented products in 2009. That leaves Madison about 10 years behind. The CDC should know something about what makes people sick. Wouldn't that behoove City of Madison leaders to enact similar policies for the health of employees and patrons alike? Isn't the City responsible to make all public spaces ADA compliant?

In June of 2009, the CDC (Center for Disease Control) put on its internal website an indoor air environmental quality policy intended to maintain good indoor air

quality in buildings in which its employees work. Among other things, the CDC policy states:

Scented or fragranced products are prohibited at all times in all interior space owned, rented, or leased by the CDC. This includes the use of the following products:

- Incense, candles, or reed diffusers
- Fragrance-emitting devices of any kind
- Wall-mounted devices, similar to fragrance-emitting devices, that operate automatically or by pushing a button to dispense deodorizers or disinfectants
- Potpourri
- Plug-in or spray air fresheners
- Urinal or toilet blocks
- Other fragranced deodorizer or reodorizer products

In addition, the CDC encourages employees to be as fragrance-free as possible when they arrive in the workplace. Fragrance is not appropriate for a professional work environment, and the use of some products with fragrance may be detrimental to the health of workers with the following: chemical sensitivities, allergies, asthma, and chronic headaches/migraines.

It is important to note that the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) website lists air fresheners as a source of indoor air pollution and that the CDC Indoor Air Quality Policy bans essential oils in all CDC facilities. Essential oils are really nothing more than chemicals. It's just they're not synthetic.

Christine Oliver, MD: The CDC Indoor air policy is a very important policy and provides an example of what we should be doing in every workplace in the country. I think all workplaces should be fragrance-free. The number of people who are chemically sensitive and/or with diagnosed Multiple Chemical Sensitivities (MCS) is increasing on a daily basis. A fragrance-free policy allows these individuals who are chemically sensitive to continue their employment. As a result, they do not have to turn to Social Security Disability for income.

Please consider taking up the public health issue to ensure all spaces are safe for everyone.

Thank you  
Sincerely,

Mary Rice