

Scent-Fragrance Awareness in the Workplace - Managers Guidelines

Questions to consider:

1. What limitations is the employee with fragrance sensitivity experiencing?
2. How do these limitations affect the employee and the employee's job performance?
3. What specific job tasks are problematic as a result of these limitations?
4. What accommodations are available to reduce or eliminate these problems? Are all possible resources being used to determine possible accommodations?
5. Has the employee with fragrance sensitivity been consulted regarding possible accommodations?
6. Once accommodations are in place, would it be useful to meet with the employee with fragrance sensitivity to evaluate the effectiveness of the accommodations and to determine whether additional accommodations are needed?

Accommodations Options:

When dealing with fragrance sensitivity, there are three main options to consider as accommodations:

1. **Remove the offending fragrance**
When possible, a manager/director should remove the offending fragrance, especially if the fragrance is unique to the work environment, minimal, or the manager/director has more control over it. However, as mentioned earlier, it is not reasonable to for an employer to have and enforce a total no-fragrance/scent free environment because it is difficult to enforce especially if external employees or volunteers enter the workplace.
2. **Remove the employee from the area where the fragrances are located**
When it is not possible to remove the offending fragrance, a manager/director may be able to move the employee away from the fragrance. This usually means working in an area away from co-workers, external employees, and volunteers.
3. **Remove the employee's exposure to the fragrance**
If the offending fragrance cannot be removed and the employee cannot be completely removed from the fragrance, it may be possible to reduce the employee's exposure to an acceptable level. This usually means having the employee work in a separate area of the workplace with minimum exposure to others. This can also mean allowing an employee to wear a mask.

Accommodation ideas:

- Maintain good air quality
- Discontinue the use of fragrant products
- Use only unscented cleaning products
- Modify workstation location
- Modify work schedule
- Allow for fresh air breaks

Address any concerns the employees raise openly and honestly. Reinforce the idea that this policy is being implemented.

Make it clear that the policy applies to everyone (including visitors, patients, etc.) and as a result of medical concerns - not merely because of a dislike for a certain smell.