

Annual Report from the SCFA OH&S representative

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I have been less active on the Selkirk College Castlegar Campus OH&S Committee this year because Wayne Chernoff was receiving release time to represent the SCFA per the collective agreement and provincial WCB regulations. There has recently been a change, and Wayne will no longer receive release time, and I will become more active on this committee.

My primary OH&S initiative over the past academic year was to draft a proposal for a “scent-considerate” policy at Selkirk College. While many workplaces are already designated “scent-free”, a “scent-considerate” policy attempts to educate college users of health risks associated with personal fragrances in confined spaces. Like all OH&S initiatives, this proposal will benefit everyone at Selkirk College.

My proposal is:

given that:

- so many share the Selkirk College buildings,
- during much of the year, the Selkirk College buildings have controlled fresh air exchange to accommodate heating and air conditioning systems,
- the chemistry of scents has evolved from relatively simple floral and natural extractives dissolved in alcohol to more persistent, synthetic molecules dissolved in more complex solvents, and
- there have been well-documented cases of adverse reactions and sensitivities by people exposed to scents,

the following addition to the Selkirk College OH&S Program is proposed: Selkirk College declare itself a “scent-considerate” work place.

As a “scent-considerate” work place, Selkirk College would post signs on all doors into the College buildings that state, “Selkirk College is a scent-considerate work place. Please refrain from using scents to the extent that they may irritate others. Thank you for your co-operation.”

In addition, as a scent-considerate work place, in the Introduction of the Selkirk College calendar the same notice would be included.

With these steps in place, faculty will be more comfortable requesting that students refrain from using scents to the extent that others find the scents to be irritating. Further, support and administrative workers will be more comfortable advising their co-workers if scents are irritating.

This seems an appropriate first step to raise an understanding of this issue and to minimize the risk of workers or students developing sensitivities or allergies to scents at Selkirk College.

If you have any questions or comments on this or other aspects of the College OH&S policies, please advise.