



HALDIMAND-NORFOLK HEALTH UNIT

# WORKPLACE HEALTH

## April is Cancer Awareness Month

April is a great month to promote cancer screening and prevention in your workplace. When it comes to cancer, early screening and managing risk factors are important. We cannot alter our age or family history, but we can change the things that put us at increased risk by maintaining a healthy body weight, eating well, being active, limiting alcohol and living smoke-free. Leading a healthy lifestyle is important since approximately half of cancers can be prevented or detected early.

To promote cancer screening and cancer prevention in your workplace consider working in partnership with the Health Unit or Ontario Breast Screening program (OBSP).

### Suggested Workplace Activities Include:

- Displaying posters in a visible, high traffic area such as lunch rooms, bulletin boards or restrooms.
- Buying daffodils from the Canadian Cancer Society's April campaign and placing them at a display or information booth where health information messages are easily accessible to employees.
- Playing the Cancer Care Ontario's looped presentation on a TV or laptop at a display (presentation accessible at [www.cancercare.on.ca/pcs/screening/workplacetoolkit](http://www.cancercare.on.ca/pcs/screening/workplacetoolkit)).
- Holding a lunch-and-learn session and playing the *Cancer Screening and Prevention Jeopardy game*. This game, in a PowerPoint format, is a great

way to reinforce cancer screening and prevention messages in a group setting. Contact the health unit or visit [www.cancercare.on.ca/pcs/screening/workplacetoolkit](http://www.cancercare.on.ca/pcs/screening/workplacetoolkit) for information.

- Creating a workplace team to participate in The Canadian Cancer Society Relay For Life. This event is an opportunity to get together to celebrate cancer survivors, remember loved ones lost to cancer and fight back in the hope of finding a cure.
  - o Lion's Park, Jarvis – Sept. 10 (7 p.m. to 7 a.m.)
  - o Port Dover Composite School – June 4 (7 p.m. to 7 a.m.)

(Cancer Care Ontario, 2009)



**Order Free Squeeze Magazines!**

Squeeze is published by the Be a Breast Friend Project, a joint initiative among public health units in Brant, Haldimand and Norfolk, Halton, Hamilton and Niagara to raise awareness about the importance of regular breast screening for women 50 and older. The project is funded by the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation-Ontario Region and its partners include the Canadian Cancer Society and the Ontario Breast Screening Program. For more information about the Be a Breast Friend Project, visit: [www.beabreastfriend.ca](http://www.beabreastfriend.ca).

To order copies for employees, please contact Michele Crowley, 519-426-6170 Ext. 3239, [michele.crowley@hnhu.org](mailto:michele.crowley@hnhu.org).



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# Hosting Healthy Meetings & Workshops

Hosting healthy meetings and workshops can lead to increased energy and productivity, concentration and focus as well as improved social connections and group cohesiveness.

## Eat for Health & Energy

### Ideas for healthy snacks

- Include local fresh fruit or vegetables and lower-fat dip
- Try lower-fat, higher-fibre muffins
- Offer cheese (less than 20% MF) or hummus with whole-grain crackers
- Have baked tortilla chips with salsa
- Serve whole-grain bagels with light cream cheese or jam

### Ideas for healthy beverages

- Have fresh water available.
- Offer milk or fortified soy beverages.
- Offer 100% fruit and vegetable juices.
- Provide milk for coffee or tea.

## Take a Break

Spending a long time sitting and listening affects attention and energy levels. Regular breaks increase retention and focus for improved productivity and creativity.

- Provide a break between topic changes to enhance shift of focus and attention.
- Provide a five-minute break each hour



to keep participants refreshed and focused.

- Schedule breaks regularly to minimize disruptions during the meeting or workshop.

## Get Active

Physical activity will help keep participants alert and energized. Stretching exercises will help prevent muscle pain and strain that can result from sitting in one position

over an extended period of time.

- Incorporate stretching activities with ice-breakers for an exciting and social atmosphere for physical activity.
- Arrange a walk during the second half of the lunch hour.
- Choose activities geared to people not accustomed to an active lifestyle, as well as those who are very active.

## HALDIMAND & NORFOLK WORKPLACES...



This April, the Health Unit will be running a two week pedometer step challenge open to all workplaces in Haldimand and Norfolk counties. A pedometer challenge is a great way to incorporate physical activity into your workplace as well as bring employees together as a team. With this newsletter you will find a flyer promoting our walking challenge.

If you would like your workplace to participate please contact Julia Hartley at the Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit, 905-318-5367 Ext. 3236 or 519-426-6170 Ext. 3236, [julia.hartley@hnhu.org](mailto:julia.hartley@hnhu.org).

# Scented Products in the WORKPLACE

A growing number of people experience symptoms when exposed to scented products such as perfume, make-up, shampoo and deodorant; or products such as air fresheners and cleaners. Exposure to scented products affects everyone differently, from mild irritations to major side effects such as: headaches; dizziness; fatigue; watery eyes; stuffy nose or sinusitis; coughing, tightness in the chest; wheezing and shortness of breath.



The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety reports that certain odours, even the smallest amounts, can trigger an attack in allergic and asthmatic individuals, as well as those with other conditions. Even individuals without pre-existing health problems can have irritation to their upper airways, eye symptoms and general malaise when exposed to certain fragrances. Some people can develop sensitivities as a result of past experience and may develop rashes, headaches and respiratory symptoms even at very low levels of fragrance.

A growing number of workplaces, schools, hospitals and public places are adopting scent-free policies to promote the following health benefits:

- Ensure good indoor air quality.
- Promote healthier and more productive environments for staff and students.
- Accommodate individuals diagnosed with environmental sensitivities.

Norfolk County has recently adopted a Scent Free Policy that is not a complete ban, but a recommendation that employees and contractors, whenever possible, voluntarily refrain from the use of chemical-based scented products. It is Norfolk County's aim to reduce the risk of health problems and reactions that can be caused by chemical and fragrance products.

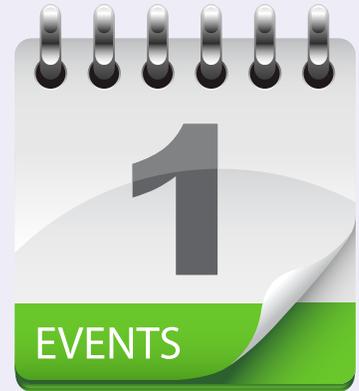
## Tips for Starting a Scent-Free Workplace

- Raise awareness with staff and management about why a policy would be beneficial. If your workplace is unionized, speak to a union representative.
- Work with your occupational health and safety department to develop the policy or guidelines.
- Develop and post a clearly worded scent-free policy.
- Post information to notify anyone who will be entering your workplace to refrain from wearing scented products.
- Use alternatives to scented office products, such as scent-free markers; and avoid pesticides and harsh, strongly scented cleaning products.

(Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, 2008, www.ccohs.ca)



## UPCOMING EVENTS



### April:

- National Cancer Month [www.cancer.ca](http://www.cancer.ca)
- Oral Health Month [www.cda-adc.ca](http://www.cda-adc.ca)
- April 3 to 9 – National Mental Health Week [www.cmha.ca](http://www.cmha.ca)
- April 11 – World Health Day [www.who.int/world-health-day](http://www.who.int/world-health-day)
  - o Caledonia 2 to 4 p.m.
  - o Port Dover 2 to 4 p.m.
- April 28 – Prenatal Health Fair [www.hnhu.org](http://www.hnhu.org)
  - o Caledonia 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

### May:

- May 3 to 9 North American Occupational Safety and Health Week [www.naosh.org](http://www.naosh.org)
- May 31 – World No-Tobacco Day [www.cctc.ca](http://www.cctc.ca)

### June:

- Stroke Awareness Month [www.heartandstroke.ca](http://www.heartandstroke.ca)
- June 4 - Relay for Life [www.cancer.ca](http://www.cancer.ca)
  - o Port Dover Composite School - 7 p.m. to 7 a.m.
- June 14 – World Blood Donor Day [www.wbdd.org](http://www.wbdd.org)

# New Legislation Tackles Workplace Violence and Harassment

Bill 168, An Act to amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act with respect to violence and harassment in the workplace and other matters, will significantly impact workplaces in the province of Ontario. The amendments to the Occupational Health and Safety Act will, therefore, come into force in six months, on June 15, 2010. At that time, workplaces in Ontario where more than five workers are regularly employed will be required to have the necessary policies, programs, measures and procedures in place.

The legislation will require employers to develop:

- Violence\* and harassment policies and programs.
- Employee reporting and incident investigation procedures.
- Emergency response procedure (violence only).
- Process to deal with incidents, complaints and threats of violence.

*\*Employers are required to complete a risk assessment of violence hazards that may arise from the nature of the workplace, the type of work or the conditions of work before*

*developing a program.*

The employer must respond when aware of domestic violence that may expose a worker to physical injury in the workplace.

## Harm to victims

The emotional and physical trauma to victims, their families and co-workers has immeasurable personal costs.

Research also shows that bullied employees, for example, are unproductive between 10 and 52 per cent of their time at work. These employees spend time:

- Defending themselves and networking for support.
- Thinking about the situation.
- Being demotivated and stressed.
- Taking sick leave due to stress-related illnesses (CSC).

To obtain a copy of Bill 168, please visit [www.hnhu.org](http://www.hnhu.org) – For Workplaces.

*(Adapted from [http://www.iapa.ca/main/articles/2009\\_workplace\\_violence.aspx](http://www.iapa.ca/main/articles/2009_workplace_violence.aspx) March, 2010)*

## Just how widespread is workplace violence?

- From April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009, Ontario Ministry of Labour Inspectors made 417 field visits and issued 351 orders related to violence in the workplace. (MOL, 2009).
- In 2007, there were 2,150 allowed lost-time claims from assaults, violent acts, harassment and acts of war or terrorism in Ontario (VWSIB, 2007).
- According to the 2004 General Social Survey, 17 per cent of all self-reported incidents of violent victimization, including sexual assault, robbery and physical assault, happened at the workplace. This represents over 356,000 violent workplace incidents in Canada (StatCan, 2007).

## Harm to organizations

Harm to Organizational Culture	Harm to the Bottom Line
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harm to image, reputation.</li> <li>• Difficulty in employee recruitment, training and retention.</li> <li>• Reduced morale and productivity.</li> <li>• Strained management-employee relations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absenteeism and sick leave.</li> <li>• Employee turnover.</li> <li>• Employee Assistance Program costs.</li> <li>• Short term/long term disability and drug plan costs.</li> <li>• Workplace accidents.</li> <li>• Stress-related lawsuits.</li> </ul>



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