

INTRODUCTION

Multiple Chemical Sensitivities (MCS) is an increasingly alarming Worldwide public health problem caused by our toxic environment. MCS is a debilitating illness/disability characterized by extreme sensitivities to chemicals, found everywhere in our environment. Reactions may be immediate or delayed and can be life-threatening. MCS is an invisible disability. Upon chemical exposure, persons disabled by MCS can become very ill, experience very large number of symptoms, and can develop severe respiratory and neurological problems, such as difficulty breathing, heart palpitations, irregular heartbeat, short term memory loss, confusion, disorientation, impairment of cognitive functions, alteration of speech and behavior, extreme weakness impairing the ability to walk, and consequently require prompt assistance upon request. Please visit MCS Homepage at

www.nettally.com/prusty/mcs.htm

Chemical barriers for persons disabled by Multiple Chemical Sensitivities (MCS) are comparable to the barriers that staircases present to people unable to walk and confined to wheelchairs. It makes it impossible for them to access the premises of a public place. Some of the most problematic chemical barriers for persons disabled by MCS are perfumes, scented products, deodorizers, especially fragrance emitting devices, cleaning products, photocopiers machines emissions, photo labs, insecticides, pesticides, tobacco and barbecue smoke, incense, wood burning, new carpeting, paint, gasoline, new buildings and renovations.

According to independent studies collected by the National Institute of health and the

National Academy of Sciences, air fresheners are composed of carcinogenic and neurotoxin chemicals (toxic to the brain and central nervous system) and instead of disinfecting the air, air fresheners add toxic chemicals to the air we breathe, and impose risks to human health. Air fresheners cause adverse health effects in an estimated 12% to 15% of the general population and trigger asthmatic attacks in nearly 71% of asthmatics. Reducing drastically the use of toxic chemicals will not only facilitate access to persons disabled by Multiple Chemical Sensitivities (MCS), but will also help to prevent other people from developing environmentally induced illnesses such as MCS. Places of public accommodation should use safe, less toxic alternatives such as avoiding the use of deadly pesticides and resort to integrated pest management (IPM). For information on integrated pest management (IPM), please visit the following web sites.

<http://thebestcontrol.com>

www.healthylawnsforhealthfamilies.com

www.grassrootsinfo.org

They also should improve indoor air quality, by adopting OSHA recommendation for indoor air quality as a standard including minimum air flow and maintenance for ventilation systems which is a fresh air intake of 20 cubic feet of fresh air per minute per building occupant and 60 cubic feet of fresh air per minute per occupant in heavily polluted places, such as photo lab, photocopiers machines shops, Hospitals, Doctor and Dentist offices.

STANDARD ACCOMMODATIONS UNDER ADA FOR PERSONS DISABLED BY MULTIPLE CHEMICAL SENSITIVITIES (MCS)

- 1- Due to the nature of this debilitating illness/disability, it is the responsibility of a company to EDUCATE its staff and employees thoroughly by holding meetings and using training materials, such as the brochure I wrote: "What you should know about Multiple Chemical Sensitivities (MCS)" and the brochure "Public accommodations of Persons disabled by Multiple Chemical Sensitivities (MCS) under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)".
- 2- It is of utmost importance for companies to have the above information on Multiple Chemical Sensitivities (MCS) available in a training manual as well as on line from a central location, for all their staff and employees, to view as needed.
- 3- Upon request, extremely prompt in-store assistance, by "fragrance-free" employees, should be given, such as helping to locate items, guide a confused, disoriented MCS person, in the store, accompany the MCS person to an extremely fast check out, and to the parking lot. The Access Board, an independent Federal Agency, devoted to accessibility for persons with Disabilities, has adopted as of July 26th, 2000 a fragrance-free environment for persons disabled by MCS.

<http://www.access-board.gov>

These fragrance-free environments are being more and more adopted all over the nation.

- 4- Helping a temporarily, cognitively impaired MCS person fill out forms, putting stamps on an envelope, offering a seat or a wheel chair, are some of the accommodations that will help an MCS person.
- 5- Providing extremely prompt curb side service, outdoor service, is a most frequent accommodation for persons disabled by MCS. A person with MCS may make arrangement with a store by calling ahead of time, or may step-in briefly, requesting outdoor service.
- 6- Sometimes, due to total inaccessibility of a place of public accommodation, services to be rendered at the home of an MCS person should be granted as per reasonable accommodations under ADA. More and more companies, institutions all over the nation are providing services at the home of MCS persons upon their request.
- 7- It is of utmost importance for companies to train their employees, to treat disabled persons with respect, dignity, courtesy, and to not challenge or harass persons with INVISIBLE DISABILITIES, such as MCS. It is not only cruel, and intolerable, it is also against the Law.
- 8- It is common for persons with MCS to wear a mask, (similar to a painter mask) a gas mask or carry an oxygen tank. Crude remarks and jokes from

the parts of employees should not be tolerated and are unlawful.

- 9- No chemical sprays, cleaning, chemical products, should be used IN THE PRESENCE of an MCS person, as it could result in a life-threatening situation for the person with MCS. It can also be considered, in some circumstances, under the Law, a physical assault on the person with MCS. Signs should be put at entrance doors warning persons with MCS, of new carpeting, fresh pesticides applications, fresh paint, renovations...etc, not to endanger the life of a person with MCS.
- 10- Accommodating persons disabled by Multiple Chemical Sensitivities (MCS) require very little effort and can be easily achieved to the satisfaction of the persons disabled by MCS, the ADA and the companies. With cooperation, and the willingness to help, places of public accommodation will be able to provide quality service to all persons disabled by Multiple Chemical Sensitivities (MCS) and should be proud of it!

PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS OF PERSONS DISABLED BY MULTIPLE CHEMICAL SENSITIVITIES (MCS) UNDER THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)



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