

News and Science

Fragrance Sickens Several Men and Eleven Students

“Patches was arrested in July and charged with second-degree battery for spraying several men with cologne.”



A woman named Patches was arrested in July and charged with second-degree battery for spraying several men with the cologne she was selling. Police say her fragrance made two of the men pass out.

In September, eleven students and a bus driver from the McLaughlin Middle School in New Hampshire were taken by ambulance to the hospital and treated for vomiting and shortness of breath after being overcome with fragrance from a student's perfume.

Perfume is becoming an increasing menace to the population at large. A 2007 seminar conducted by the Massachusetts Nurses Association (MNA) revealed the following facts about fragrances:

- There are 3,000–5,000 chemicals used in fragrances.
- 95% of these chemicals are derived from petroleum.
- The perfume industry is not regulated by any government agency.
- In 1986, the National Academy of Sci-

ences targeted fragrances as one of the six categories of chemicals that should be given high priority for neurotoxicity testing.

- Less than 20% of chemicals used in fragrances have been tested for human toxicity.
- Many chemicals that are known to be toxic are still used in perfume.
- Many of the chemicals in your perfume are also found in gasoline and in cigarette smoke.

The seminar goes on to confirm:

Thanks to the trade secret protections, the fragrance industry is one of the least regulated industries in the country.... 84% of these ingredients have not been tested for human toxicity or tested only minimally... and some that fall under "hazardous waste disposal" requirements.... Here are some of the most common chemicals used in fragrance products and the adverse reactions associated with them:

Acetone, found in cologne, dish-washing liquid, and detergent, acts primarily on the central nervous system. Inhalation can cause dryness of the mouth and throat, dizziness, nausea, and slurred speech.

“Ask your employer, school, church, and other public places to ban fragrances now!”

Benzaldehyde, found in perfume, cologne, hairspray, lotion, and shampoo, acts as a central nervous system depressant, and causes irritation to the mouth, throat, and eyes. It may cause kidney damage.

Methylene chloride, found in shampoo, cologne, and paint and varnish remover, decreases the oxygen carrying capacity of the blood, resulting in headache, giddiness, stupor, fatigue, and irritability. It is also regarded as a carcinogen.”

See

<http://users.lmi.net/~wilworks/ehn20.htm> for other dangerous chemicals used in fragrances.

Students in schools and employees in the workplace should refrain from wearing, let alone carrying, perfume in a public place where toxic ingredients may sicken others.

The bus and Patches incidents provide proof of the facts presented by the Massachusetts Nurses Association. Fragrances may be toxic and dangerous to humans.

Perfume is sold legally; however, legal sale does not ensure its safety. Pesticides are also sold legally and are well known for their hazardous nature.

The cost and quality of a fragrance is irrelevant. Even expensive perfumes and colognes contain toxic ingredients.

Perfume should ideally be banned from schools, as well as the work place. Ask your employer, school, church, and other public places to ban fragrances now! Do it for public safety.

To access the free MNA course, go to <http://www.courseserver.com/mna/> and click on "Register". The subscription code for members is mna001, non-Members use mna002, and students use mna003. Fill out all of the fields in the form and press "submit".

This information is also listed on the Massachusetts Nurses Association (MNA) website at:

www.massnurses.org/ce/onlineCE.htm.

For more information on this seminar, contact the Division of Health and Safety at 781-830-5723.

References:

New Hampshire Union Leader. *11 checked out at hospital after perfume sickens students.* September 12, 2008. <http://tinyurl.com/3gv6yo>

WorldNow and WAFB, a Raycom Media station. *Patches arrested, police say her scent made men pass out.* July 11, 2008. <http://tinyurl.com/4nd8zf>

Tuohy, Dan. *Perfume sickens students, bus driver.* *New Hampshire Union Leader.* September 11, 2008. <http://tinyurl.com/3t7yx9>

