

INTRODUCTION

Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) also known as Chemical Sensitivity/ Toxic Chemical Injury, is an increasingly alarming worldwide public health problem triggered by our toxic environment. MCS is a painful, debilitating illness/disability characterized by extreme sensitivity 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. It is of utmost importance to read first very carefully my other brochure, "*What you should know about.....Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) also known as Toxic Chemical Injury*" available on our award-winning website MCS Homepage/International MCS/EMS Awareness at:

<http://www.nettally.com/prusty/mcs.htm>

Chemical barriers for persons disabled by Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) are comparable to the barriers that staircases present to people unable to walk and confined to wheelchairs. It makes it virtually 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, ink, insecticides, pesticides, fumigants, fertilizers, 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 Sensitivity (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 dangerous pesticides and resort to integrated pest management (IPM). For information on integrated pest management (IPM), please visit the following websites.

<http://thebestcontrol.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, doctors and dentists offices, health care facilities.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, has officially adopted a fragrance-free policy as part of its "Indoor Environmental Quality policy" in all its offices nationwide and has mentioned several times Chemical Sensitivity.

<http://www.americanchronicle.com/articles/view/154089>

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

- 1- Due to the nature of this debilitating illness/disability, it is the responsibility of businesses, hospitals, clinics, doctors offices, dentists, health care providers ..etc to thoroughly train their staff about MCS and accommodations under the law ADA.
- 2- It is of utmost importance, especially for health care facilities, to develop a policy of accommodations for persons disabled by MCS, based on the CDC fragrance-free /Indoor Environmental Quality Policy.
- 3- Upon request, prompt indoor assistance, by as "fragrance-free" as possible employees, should be granted, such as helping to locate items in a store, guide a confused, disoriented MCS person, accompany her/him to a fast check out, and provide help as feasible, in the parking lot.
- 4- The US Access-Board, an independent Federal Agency, devoted to accessibility for persons with Disabilities, has adopted a fragrance-free environment for persons disabled by MCS and has issued extensive Guidelines of Accommodations for persons disabled by MCS and EMS (Electromagnetic Sensitivity.)

<http://www.access-board.gov/news/ieq.htm>

<http://web.archive.org/web/20060714233448/http://ieq.nibs.org/om>

<http://www.access-board.gov/about/policies/fragrance.htm>

These fragrance-free environments are being more and more adopted nationwide as part of accommodations for persons disabled by Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS).

- 5- Helping a temporarily, cognitively impaired MCS person fill out forms, putting stamps on an envelope, offering a seat or a wheelchair, are some of the reasonable accommodations under ADA, suitable for persons with MCS.
- 6- Providing prompt outdoors/curbside service, is a frequent reasonable accommodation for persons disabled by MCS. A person with MCS may make arrangement by calling ahead of time, or may step-in briefly, requesting outdoors service under ADA.
- 7- Sometimes, due to total inaccessibility of a given place, services to be rendered at the home of an MCS person should be granted as per reasonable accommodation under ADA. More and more companies, institutions all over the nation are providing services at the home of MCS persons upon their request.
- 8- It is of utmost importance to train employees to treat persons with disabilities, with utmost respect, dignity, courtesy, and to not challenge/ harass persons with invisible disabilities, such as MCS, as it is unacceptable as well as unlawful.
- 9- It is common for persons with MCS to wear a mask, (similar to a painter mask) a gas mask or carry an oxygen tank and wear protective gloves. Insensitive remarks and jokes from the parts of employees should not be tolerated and constitute discrimination.
- 10- No chemical sprays, cleaning, chemical products, should be deliberately used in the presence of an MCS person, as it could result in severe to life-threatening reaction. It can also be considered, in some circumstances, under the Law, a chemical/physical assault, with all the legal consequences this would entail. Signs should be put at entrance doors warning

persons with MCS, of new carpeting, fresh pesticides applications, fresh paint, renovations...etc, in order to not put at risk the life of persons with MCS.

Accommodating persons disabled by Multiple Chemical Sensitivity is a requirement under the law "The Americans with Disabilities Act " and failure to do so, may result in serious legal consequences.

References

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
 U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) "Indoor Environmental Quality Policy"
 U.S. Access-Board
 American Chronicle
 International MCS/EMS Awareness
 MCS-America

About the Author : Christiane Tourtet B.A. is the Founder/President of MCS Homepage, International MCS/EMS Awareness. She is a renowned award-winning writer, author, photo-journalist, MCS/EMS and human rights activist. She graduated from Florida Junior College with an Associate in Science, an Associate in Arts Degrees , both with high honors, and a Bachelor in Arts from Jacksonville University, Jacksonville, Florida. She is a former teacher, college instructor, radio producer/air personality, television commercial actress, voice over talent and artist. Her biography has been included in numerous worldwide publications, notably in Who's Who in America, Who's Who in the World. As a role model for society, her biography has been published in the Millennium 54th Edition of Who's Who in America which was chosen to be included in the White House Millennium Capsule.

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



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<http://www.nettally.com/prusty/mcs.htm>

<http://www.americanchronicle.com/authors/view/1766>