

Body Odour in the Workplace – Ask the Expert



As the weather gets warmer, you may struggle with sensory violations in the workplace – from a lack of deodorant to too much perfume.

How do you approach the difficult conversation of body odour in the workplace with empathy, respect, and compliance?

QUESTION

With the Summer heat here, we are struggling with some employees who have strong body odour issues, making it difficult for our team to get work done or work with them on projects. We don't have a policy on body odour but we do have a code of conduct/respectful workplace policy. How do we address this issue with these employees, especially one in particular?

ANSWER

This can be an awkward issue to address with any team member, whether it be body odour or using too much perfume. You are clearly coming at this situation with an empathetic viewpoint, and I think you have all the correct measures in place to have a one-on-one meeting with this team member that gets the message across without making them feel self-conscious.

EXPLANATION

If possible, send out a reminder via email and posted on any community bulletin boards in common areas as such: "Hey team, as the weather warms up we want to remind everyone to maintain good hygiene, apply deodorant at least once daily, and ensure you are not spraying too much perfume/cologne on yourself before work – it helps show respect for your coworkers and keeps this a pleasant space to work in! Please refer to our respectful workplace policy and body odour policy if you have any questions or need more information." This way, you are not singling out any employees.

If the issue persists, it is okay to have a one-on-one meeting with this employee (and any others) in a private setting about your concerns. You have approached this topic with sensitivity and I am sure you will do the same when addressing it with your team and, if it leads to it, with the individuals in question. Check out our

article [“Talking About Hygiene Concerns In The Workplace”](#) and you can adapt our [Scented Products In The Workplace Policy](#) to address body odour and hygiene concerns.