











Wednesday, May 26, 2010

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Las Vegas goes fragrance-free (for a day)

In Sin City, May 26 is Indoor Air Quality Awareness Day.

Wed, May 26 2010 at 1:06 PM EST

By Katherine Butler

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Photo: iStockphoto

Anyone who travels the streets and hallways of Las Vegas knows that the scents of Sin City can be overwhelming. From buffet odors to the stink of cigarettes to the heavily perfumed gamblers stationed at slots, this place can be an olfactory overload. For someone with allergies or chemical sensitivities, a trip to Vegas could be a bust.

But the sensory-sensitive can walk freely in Las Vegas — or at least they can today. [The New York Times reports that Las Vegas has chosen May 26 as a fragrance-free day.](#) That means perfume, hairspray, body oil and equivalents are not allowed, all in honor of Indoor Quality Awareness Day. No word on what it means for smoking indoors.

Councilwoman Lois Tarkanian called for the ban after the National Toxic Encephalopathy Foundation brought her attention to the plight of people with brain injuries caused by chemicals. As she told the NY Times, "I thought this might be interesting, so we will try to go scent-free for that day and see if differences occur." She asked people not to wear perfume and lobbied cleaning staff to use vinegar instead of harsh chemicals.

Angel De Fazio, president of the National Toxic Encephalopathy Foundation, has long urged casinos and hotels to stop putting scents in their air systems. As she told the NY Times, "I have had an ongoing battle with most of them. People do not understand how much of an impact the indoor air has upon their health."

Perfumes can be quite toxic. [The Environmental Working Group is currently campaigning to bring awareness to the complex mix of natural essences and synthetic chemicals](#)

that go into scents. Many of these chemicals have not been assessed to determine their toxicity. Others are associated with hormone disruption and allergic reactions. As the EWG reports, U.S. Food and Drug Administration has not assessed most fragrance chemicals for safety.

But for today, at least, Las Vegas is just a little bit less chemically laden.

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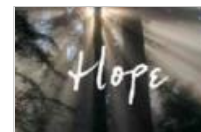
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