

From: "[Johnston, Sadhu](mailto:Sadhu.Johnston@vancouver.ca)" <[Sadhu.Johnston@vancouver.ca](mailto:Sadhu.Johnston@vancouver.ca)>  
To: "[Direct to Mayor and Council - DL](#)"  
CC: "[City Manager's Correspondence Group - DL](#)"  
"[Kassam, Nick](mailto:Nick.Kassam@vancouver.ca)" <[Nick.Kassam@vancouver.ca](mailto:Nick.Kassam@vancouver.ca)>  
Date: 11/10/2020 3:30:36 PM  
Subject: Memo - RTS 13825 – Providing Free Menstrual Products in City of Vancouver Civic Facilities Washrooms  
Attachments: REFM - Memo to Mayor Council - Free Menstrual Products in City of Vancouver Civic Facilities Washrooms 2020.pdf

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Dear Mayor and Council,

The purpose of this memo is to provide an update to the motion put forward by Councillor De Genova and Councillor Bligh on March 10, 2020, regarding 'Providing Free Menstrual Products in City of Vancouver Civic Facilities Washrooms' – RTS 13825.

If you have any follow-up questions, please feel free to contact Nick Kassam, GM of REFM at [nick.kassam@vancouver.ca](mailto:nick.kassam@vancouver.ca)

Best,  
Sadhu

**Sadhu Aufochs Johnston** | City Manager  
Office of the City Manager | City of Vancouver  
604.873.7627 | [sadhu.johnston@vancouver.ca](mailto:sadhu.johnston@vancouver.ca)

Pronouns: he, him, his



*The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples.*

## MEMORANDUM

November 9, 2020

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Sadhu Johnston, City Manager  
Paul Mochrie, Deputy City Manager  
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager  
Lynda Graves, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office  
Sandra Singh, General Manager, Arts, Culture and Community Services  
Christina De Castell, Chief Librarian  
Donnie Rosa, General Manager, Vancouver Park Board  
Patrice Impey, General Manager, Finance, Risk & SCM  
Rena Kendall-Craden, Civic Engagement and Communications Director  
Rosemary Hagiwara, Acting City Clerk  
Anita Zaenker, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office  
Neil Monckton, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office  
Alvin Singh, Communications Director, Mayor's Office  
Paul Hsu, Director, Facilities Management, REFM

FROM: Nick Kassam  
General Manager, Real Estate and Facilities Management

SUBJECT: RTS 13825 – Providing Free Menstrual Products in City of Vancouver Civic Facilities Washrooms

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Dear Mayor and Council,

The purpose of this memo is to provide an update to the motion put forward by Councillor De Genova and Councillor Bligh on March 10, 2020, regarding 'Providing Free Menstrual Products in City of Vancouver Civic Facilities Washrooms'.

Background:

Arts, Culture and Community Services (ACCS) currently provides free menstrual products at Gathering Place, Evelyn Saller Centre, Carnegie Community Centre and Oppenheimer field house, upon request from the front counter. The products are acquired either through donations or purchased from a supplier when there is a shortage of donations.

Vancouver Public Library (VPL) facilities and Vancouver Board of Parks & Recreation (VPB) facilities currently do not provide free menstrual products. However, a similar motion to provide

cost-free menstrual products in Park Board facilities was put forward by Commissioner Giesbrecht on January 20, 2020.

Both the University of British Columbia and the Vancouver School Board have rolled out free menstrual product programs, starting at the end of 2019 and beginning of 2020, respectively. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they were unable to share much information with us as their facilities were closed for most of 2020.

#### Discussion:

Real Estate and Facilities Management (REFM) and ACCS staff are currently exploring a more discreet and accessible option to replace the current free distribution process. REFM is also working with Supply Chain Management to secure a consistent supply for the program in City facilities. Concurrently, REFM is working with Park Board staff to provide cost-free menstrual products in Park Board facilities. VPL is also considering modelling a program in their facilities after the one currently under development in City facilities.

The City has provided menstrual products for a fee in its facilities for many years and has significant experience with this type of distribution. Through this experience, staff have identified several considerations that they are working to address as part of a free program, including:

- Vandalism of dispensers – this typically has occurred as a result of theft of money in the dispenser, which is not anticipated to be an issue for the free program.
- High touch dispensers – the current dispensers require users to touch the dispenser to access the product. To eliminate this high touch surface, staff are working to source a touchless dispenser. However, this will require some additional maintenance as touchless dispensers run on batteries that will need replacement.
- Waste receptacle liners – the liners currently provided in waste receptacles are not compostable or recyclable. To reduce environmental impact, staff are working with the vendor to source a compostable liner.
- Waste removal – a procedure to ensure the safety of staff when removing and disposing of waste is of paramount importance and varies depending on the waste receptacle and liner. Staff will be trained on the procedure prior to rollout of a program.

#### Next Steps:

Staff are currently waiting for samples of no-touch dispensers, and waste receptacles and liners to arrive from the vendor and will work with the vendor to ensure our key considerations are addressed. Once our requirements are satisfied, we will run a pilot program in Carnegie Centre, Evelyn Saller Centre, Gathering Place and City Hall; this is planned to commence in January 2021. The purpose of this pilot is to determine the reliability of the dispensers, identify any maintenance and waste removal issues associated with the dispensers and waste receptacles, assess product demand, and determine costs for a citywide program.

The Park Board will be running a similar pilot in their facilities over the same period. VPL intends to observe REFM's pilot and implement a program in their facilities once the results of the City pilot are known.

Staff will report back to Council with learnings from the pilot in Q3 2021, which will include usage statistics, program costs, funding options, and recommendations for implementation of a broader program rollout.

If you have any follow-up questions, please feel free to contact me, [nick.kassam@vancouver.ca](mailto:nick.kassam@vancouver.ca)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nick Kassam". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Nick Kassam  
General Manager, Real Estate and Facilities Management

604.871.6859 | [nick.kassam@vancouver.ca](mailto:nick.kassam@vancouver.ca)