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Organizational Dress Codes



Employees act as the face of an organization and representatives of its overall brand and image. Appropriate and professional work attire is necessary in building and maintaining this distinct impression with customers and clients alike.

The type of industry and work environment that an organization operates in can certainly direct the expected level of attire. A more casual level of dress may be encouraged in a creative work environment, whereas more formal business attire may be suitable in a corporate setting.

It is important that an organization implement a comprehensive professional dress and image policy which sets guidelines and expectations, identifying attire which is, and is not, appropriate. Addressing inappropriate behaviour regarding unsuitable attire is important in ensuring that the organization's brand and image is maintained. It is necessary that Managers and Human Resources enforce the policy in a constructive, respectful and tactful way. Also be mindful that employers may be required to be flexible with dress codes to deal with religious accommodation under human rights law. Moreover, in the unionized context, arbitrators will require that dress code policy be reasonable.

Examples of appropriate business-casual attire may include:

Examples of inappropriate attire may include:

- Blazers
- Blouses
- Casual collared shirts, knit tops, sweaters & turtlenecks
- Golf shirts
- Jackets
- Shirt & tie
- Sports Blazers
- Vests
- Casual dresses & skirts
- Tailored walking shorts as part of a suit
- Capri pants as part of a suit
- Dress pants
- Casual pants (dockers, cotton twill, corduroy, khaki type pants)
- Tailored slacks
- Dress sandals, loafers/flat shoes
- Anything that is overly revealing
- Sports jerseys
- Sweatshirts
- Tops with bare shoulders, backs or midriffs, tank tops, halter tops
- T-shirts
- Miniskirts
- Shorts
- Spaghetti strap dresses, slip dresses
- Cargo pants
- Denim pants
- Exercise wear
- Leggings
- Athletic shoes
- Flip-flops, beach footwear
- Boating/deck shoes
- Winter, hiking boots

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