

47. Employee Dress

A. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish basic guidelines for appropriate work dress for employees of the Nebraska Supreme Court. In an effort to maintain a professional appearance as an employee of the Nebraska Supreme Court, staff shall be well groomed and shall present an appropriate image commensurate with the status and dignity of the office. Attire shall be in good taste and reflect the requirements of the job and the working conditions. Employees often have frequent public contact, and their appearance and demeanor convey an impression of the court system. The purpose of this policy is to promote a positive image of the Nebraska Supreme Court, but also to allow for flexibility and considerations of safety, job requirements, and the work environment. Personal neatness, cleanliness, and appropriate attire provide an atmosphere of professionalism and inspire confidence in an employee's ability to deliver services.

B. Applicability

This policy applies to all employees of the Nebraska Supreme Court operating in court and probation offices and includes interns, volunteers, contract employees, temporary employees, and grant-funded positions. The various offices may have unique operating needs such as public contact and court appearances, and thus, local offices may establish more stringent requirements based on those needs. At no time may an office establish lower standards than those set forth herein, except as needed in individual cases of safety or work needs such as remodeling or moving of offices or equipment. However, employees working in offices that are not accessible to the public shall follow their supervisor's requirements for appearance.

C. Policy

(1) Courtroom and Community Activities

Professional attire is required in court and when participating in or attending community activities in which an employee is representing the Nebraska Supreme Court. Professional attire means that employees shall dress in a conventional businesslike manner; for women, appropriate professional attire includes dresses, skirts, dress slacks, and pantsuits, and for men, appropriate professional attire includes collared shirts, ties, suits, or sport coats. Dress shoes are required.

(2) Office Staff not Required to Attend Court

Professional business casual is acceptable when not required to attend court. Professional business casual shall mean the following: casual pants, shirt, and dress shoes. Shirts should have a collar or finished edge. Capri or “Gaucho” pants may be worn if they are no shorter than mid-calf length and are worn in the same manner as dress slacks, i.e., with a jacket or dress shirt. Sandals or open-toed shoes may be worn without nylons or pantyhose and only if feet/toenails are properly groomed. No jeans or denim of any color, shorts, or hats are permitted unless specifically authorized by the Administrative Office. In addition, males shall maintain facial hair in a groomed fashion. Professional business casual is required while conducting business during the course of the day and for visits to employers, schools, and service providers.

(3) Field Work (for Probation Employees Only)

Field Work is defined as visitations to clients’ homes or similar locations for the purpose of verifying clients’ residence address; conducting a home, vehicle, or personal search; collection of a breath or urine sample; inspection of electronic monitoring equipment; or any other similar activity.

Field Attire shall consist of business casual clothing unless the residence or purpose of the visit warrants a less casual attire. Such less casual attire shall be approved by the Chief Probation Officer or his/her designee prior to the visitation. An attire of less than business casual shall consist of jeans, a collared shirt with a probation logo or similar polo shirt, and casual shoes. No sandals or open-toed shoes may be worn for field work.

(4) Unacceptable Attire

The following is a list of unacceptable attire, not to be considered inclusive, although it is subject to modification by a supervisor or management and the limited exceptions detailed elsewhere in this policy.

- Tank tops, spaghetti-strap tops, strapless tops, or any top that does not completely cover the midriff area.
- Shirts with logos other than a manufacturer, probation, or court logo.
- Clothing with noticeable wear, including ripped, frayed, dirty, or wrinkled clothing.
- Stretch pants or leggings worn without skirts.
- Fleece wear or warm-up clothing.
- Flip-flop sandals, slippers, or Crocs.
- Clothing which, in the judgment of a supervisor or management, is excessively tight, short, low-cut, revealing, or sheer.

(5) Other Considerations

Battle dress uniforms (BDUs), cargo pants, “raid-type” jackets, or similar clothing with law

enforcement identifiers should not be worn unless in conjunction with conducting a search or home visits in conjunction with law enforcement.

Tattoos may distract from the normal course of business, and therefore, all visible tattoos shall be concealed during working hours.

Jewelry and other accessories shall not present a safety hazard nor be offensive to clients and co-workers.

1. Jewelry shall not be functionally restrictive or excessive.
2. Jewelry which, by its slogan, color, and/or design, implies a negative connotation is prohibited.

Body Piercings: Excessive body piercing in nontraditional areas of the body may distract from the normal course of business, and therefore, such piercings shall not be visible.

1. Although an employee may have parts of his or her body pierced, it is unacceptable for an employee to wear body piercing jewelry or ornaments that are readily visible to others. Examples of unacceptable areas for piercing include, but are not limited to, the following: nose, eyebrows, eyelids, tongue, lips, chin, cheeks, hands, neck, etc.
2. The normal wearing of earrings in the earlobe is acceptable as long as the number that are worn in each ear is limited to a maximum of three per ear. The wearing of ear gauges is not permitted.
3. All staff is advised to consider safety precautions in their choice of clothing, jewelry, and shoes.
4. An employee may request an exemption to parts of these standards based on legitimate medical, religious, or cultural practice.

(6) Special Occasion Exceptions

Costumes, holiday specific outfits, or other special event outfits are acceptable for predetermined special occasions/holidays upon preapproval from the Administrative Office.

(7) Action to be Taken or Sanctions for Inappropriate Dress

A supervisor may require an individual employee to change clothes in the event that employee's attire does not fit the above criteria. The time required to change such clothes may be considered leave without pay for the employee. Personal neatness, cleanliness, and appropriate attire provide an atmosphere of professionalism and inspire confidence in an employee's ability to deliver services. Subsequent violations may be cause for other disciplinary action.

Amended 11-23-11.
