DRESS CODE POLICY
PROFESSIONAL APPEARANCE IN THE WORKPLACE: DCFS GUIDELINES

Management Directive, 10-02 | Revision Date: 07/31/2026

Overview

This Management Directive (MD) provides guidelines and clarification on County Code 5.72.010 regarding suitable clothing and professional appearance for County Employees in the performance of their duties.

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Version Summary

This management directive was updated from the previously revised 12/24/2024 version to further clarify proper/suitable attire and professional appearance in the workplace.

POLICY

Introduction

Per County Code 5.72.010 County Employees are required to wear clothing suitable to their occupations, as may be determined by their respective Department Heads. Employees shall furnish and maintain in suitable and appropriate condition such clothing and associated articles at their own expense except as otherwise expressly provided by the Board of Supervisors. Employees should maintain a neat and professional appearance in the performance of their duties. This policy applies to all employees attending virtual meeting settings and/or when reporting to the office in person.

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Guidelines

County departments provide a wide variety of programs and services, and the professional image of our workforce is critical to fostering public confidence and providing “effective and caring service.” Therefore, these guidelines on professional appearance are intended to do the following:

- Foster respect and earn the confidence of our customers, the public, vendors and fellow employees.
- Promote a positive work environment and limit distractions.
- Ensure safety and security while working.

The County of Los Angeles respects the diversity of its residents and its workforce. This policy provides guidelines on dress and appearance appropriate to the nature of the work environment, nature of work performed, involvement with the service provided to the public, and/or other circumstances or business needs as defined by the Department Head.

Employees are expected to abide by the following standards:

- Employees shall present a neat, clean and professional appearance in their performance of duties at all times based on employees’ assignment and/or work location.
- Employees must dress in a manner that will not hinder their ability to effectively complete their work assignments, including consideration of the communities served, customer expectations, business needs or standards of the department and the employee’s safety.
- Employees are expected to practice personal hygiene that does not interfere with the public and/or co-workers in their work environment.
- Employees should be mindful of, and dress appropriately for, special events, meetings and appointments with customers.
- Official photo identification badges and uniforms (where applicable) should be worn in the performance of County business and in all County facilities in order to identify employees as legitimate County representatives.
- Employees shall abide by specific dress requirements intended to ensure job-related safety such as when operating equipment or machinery, working with potentially dangerous chemicals, or for public health consideration.
- The standard above also applies to any virtual meeting settings.

Except as noted or approved by the Department Head, employees **may not** wear the following items:

- Clothing articles that may create a hostile or abusive work environment, such as sexually suggestive cartoons, pictures or words;
- Pants below the waistline or low-rise pants showing undergarments;
- Low front tops, halter tops, bare midriffs;

- Beach styled flip-flop sandals;
- Athletic wear, e.g. gym or sweatpants, leggings, jogging outfits, shorts, spandex and tank tops worn during work hours;
    - Exception - Athletic wear may be worn during break time for walking, running, etc.
- Torn, frayed or ripped clothing;
- Excessively tight fitting or oversized (baggy) garments;
- Visible excessive number of earrings and/or studs; no nose, eyebrow, lips, tongue rings and/or studs;
- Tattoos that may create a hostile or abusive work environment, such as sexually suggestive pictures or words, are to be covered at all times.

Denim or jean style pants maybe be worn due to the nature of the work performed such as field visits with children at homes and schools, support, and IT staff. In addition, all staff may wear jeans during business casual Fridays as long as they remain appropriate for the workplace.

T-shirts should not be worn during client or community-facing interactions. For those who do not interact with clients, T-shirts should be well fitted i.e. no sagging or tight fitting. They should be plain i.e. solid colors, minimal or no logos/graphics, no offensive text or images. T-Shirts can be layered under a blazer, cardigan or tailored jacket.

Exceptions to this policy may be made by the Department Head in circumstances such as County or Department-sponsored events, special occasions, seasonal weather changes, and business-casual days, but may also be made based on requests for reasonable accommodation (e.g. religious, cultural, disability, etc.).

DRESS POLICY ENFORCEMENT

This policy is intended to provide guidelines on dress and appearance and is not meant to address all situations. Therefore, depending on the nature of the work environment, nature of work performed, such as those staff who install equipment or work in stock rooms or other circumstances, there may be some differences in dress guidelines. Consistent with this policy, exceptions can be made at the department level by the Department Head with approval from the Director of Personnel due to the nature of the work, special events, and business casual days. Employees who report to work and are not in compliance with this policy may be sent home to change and return to work, unless some other remedy can be arranged, such as an employee putting on a jacket. A violation of policy may also subject an employee to discipline.

Any questions regarding this dress policy within the department should be directed to Human Resources Division, Employee Relations.

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APPROVALS

None

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HELPFUL LINKS

References

County Code, Title 5 Personnel, Section 5.72.010 – Suitable clothing to be worn.
County Code Section 5.04.090
County of Los Angeles Policies, Procedures and Guidelines 512