


POLICY NUMBER: HR2024-002	POLICY TITLE: Attire & Grooming	
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SECTION I – PURPOSE

These attire and grooming standards are designed to promote the County of Humboldt's legitimate and non-discriminatory goals to promote workplace safety and a professional image that is consistent with the employee's job duties and level of public contact. The county requires employees to maintain a professional appearance that is appropriate for their specific workplace environment and for the work being performed. Employees must maintain a neat and professional appearance in the performance of their duties.

The County of Humboldt is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion and recognizes that employees may present gender identity and expression differently. The county encourages staff to dress in the way they feel most comfortable provided a professional image is maintained in accordance with this policy and department requirements.

SECTION II – APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all County of Humboldt employees. For the purposes of this policy, "Employee" as defined below includes appointed and elected officials.

SECTION III – DEFINITIONS

Employee: Officers, deputies, assistants, and all other persons employed by the county of Humboldt including permanent, probationary, part-time, and extra help employees.

Offensive: Offensive clothing or tattoos are any clothing or tattoos that are obscene, sexually explicit, politically motivated, and/or discriminatory in accordance with the County Harassment Policy.

SECTION IV – POLICY

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:

- Foster respect and earn the confidence of our clients, the public, vendors and fellow employees.
- Promote a positive work environment and limit distractions.

- Ensure safety and security while working.

The County of Humboldt 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.

A. Appropriate Attire & Grooming

All county employees are expected to present themselves in a manner consistent with the job they are performing. These guidelines are intended to provide the basic standard of cleanliness, neatness, and appropriateness.

If an employee has questions about how these standards apply to them, the matter should be immediately raised with their supervisor for consideration and determination.

Workplace Attire Guidelines:

Department heads have the discretion to set department-specific workplace attire and grooming policies, consistent with this policy, that are subject to the approval of the Director of Human Resources or their designee. Enforcement of any policy must be equitable and free from disproportionate impact to protected classes.

Supervisors must provide staff with any department-specific workplace attire and grooming policies. Any questions about the department's guidelines should be discussed with the immediate supervisor.

Any staff member who violates the attire or grooming standards set by this policy or their department will be subject to corrective action and may be asked to change clothing or groom themselves appropriately. In these cases, employees must use benefit time for any work time missed due to failure to comply with designated workplace attire and grooming standards.

Except as approved by a department head, employees shall abide by the following guidelines. This list is not exhaustive.

- All clothing items worn in the workplace, regardless of type, must be neat, clean, and in good repair;
- Prescribed uniforms and safety equipment must be worn;
- Good personal hygiene should be maintained;
- Scented personal products must be used in moderation and with

consideration of others;

- Dress must be professionally appropriate to the work setting, particularly if the employee has contact with the public at work;
- Employees may not dress such that their undergarments, midriff, lower back, torso, or upper thighs are exposed;
- In some settings, open-toed shoes may be prohibited;
- Employees may not dress such that they are engaging in political activities on county premises or during work hours (CA GOV Code §3207);
- Employees may not wear clothing with graphics and/or writing that is offensive as defined in the section above;
- Employees may not wear clothing generally worn for recreation or exercise such as sweatpants or spandex clothing articles;
- Employees may not display visible tattoos that are offensive as defined in the section above. Employees with tattoos that meet this definition must be covered while at work.

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.). Such exceptions shall not violate CA Gov Code §3207.

B. Specific Requirements

Certain staff members may be required to meet special dress, grooming, and hygiene standards, such as wearing uniforms or protective clothing, depending on the nature of their job. Uniforms and protective clothing may be required for certain positions.

Staff members may be required to carry or wear their county-issued identification badge while at work.

C. Reasonable Accommodations or Religious or Cultural Beliefs

The county recognizes the importance of individually held religious or cultural beliefs to persons within its workforce. The county will reasonably accommodate a staff member's religious or cultural beliefs in terms of workplace attire unless the accommodation creates an undue hardship. Those requesting a workplace attire accommodation based on religious beliefs must be referred to the Department of Human Resources.

SECTION V – PROCEDURE

A. Addressing Challenges Related to Workplace Attire and Hygiene

Violations of the policy can include inappropriate or offensive clothing items, hygiene or body odor, or excessive use of strong scented personal products. If a staff member comes to work in inappropriate dress or hygiene, they will be required to go home, change into conforming attire, or properly groom, and return to work.

If an employee's clothing or hygiene is an issue, the supervisor will discuss the problem with the staff member in private to better understand their circumstances and share the specific areas to be corrected.

B. 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, involvement with the public, 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 Human Resources due to the nature of 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.

If the problem persists, corrective action, in accordance with Humboldt County Merit System Rule X, up to and including termination may occur.

Questions concerning the application of this policy should be directed to the Human Resources Department.

Board Approved:

Pursuant to Board Order _____ Dated _____