

# Dress for summer with eye toward guidelines

With the advent of summer, annual heat waves with 90-100 degree temperatures have begun, so many Kent County employees may be adjusting their work wardrobe as temperatures soar - but don't go too far. And don't forget to wear a face covering if you are unvaccinated. In addition, face masks are encouraged for all employees working within 3 feet of another person to protect against COVID-19 spread.

A number of years ago, County department heads decided to tackle the sensitive employee dress code issue themselves, rather than have the Levy Court impose a policy. The result of several meetings was the development of Work Attire Guidelines, that each agreed to enforce in their respective departments.



The guidelines eliminated “Casual Friday” for a more relaxed work environment every workday.

Employees are permitted to wear blue jeans, but they must be clean and in good condition. Shorts are not permitted unless part of a matching short suit set or uniform. Tee shirts are prohibited as are all attire with messages, characters, or advertisements - except Kent County related logos and messages.

Other examples of unacceptable attire include tight or form fitting clothing, revealing, sheer or see-through clothing, dirty, faded or torn clothing, jogging suits, micro mini-skirts, skorts, leggings, culottes, overalls, sweat pants, capri pants, flip flops, sneakers, slippers, spike heels, visible body piercing (excluding earrings), hats, caps, etc.

Employees may deviate from the guidelines only with the expressed approval of the department head, but the failure of supervisors to achieve uniformity in attire could put the issue back in the hands of Levy Court - and the seven Commissioners might go further than some employees would want.

For more information ask your department head or call the Personnel Office at 744-2310.

The work attire guidelines are posted below and on the Employee Portal webpage:

*(posted 06/14/21)*

## **KENT COUNTY**

### **Work Attire Guidelines (dress code)**

**PURPOSE** - To enhance excellent customer service through a professional presentation of each and every employee by defining and providing guidance for the daily dress and appearance expected of employees in an effort to promote a positive image of County government, its employees and the services which the County provides.

**STATEMENT** - All employees shall be neatly and professionally attired and well groomed at all times. Employees issued uniforms are required to wear the uniform each working day.

**ATTIRE EXAMPLES** - Female employees: dresses, pant suits, blouses and skirts, suits, blazers, shirts and pressed slacks/pants, sweaters, short suits, hosiery and dress shoes. Male employees: a collared shirt, pressed slacks/pants, dress shirt and tie, business suit, sport coat or sweater with dress shirt and tie, socks, and dress shoes. All clothing must be clean and in good, wearable condition.

**GROOMING EXAMPLES** - Female employees: clean, neatly combed hair, good personal hygiene. Male employees: clean, neatly combed and trimmed hair, clean shaven or neatly trimmed mustaches and/or beards, good personal hygiene.

**ENFORCEMENT** - Supervisors and managers are responsible for interpreting and enforcing the dress and grooming guidelines in their areas of responsibility. The Department Head is the ultimate authority on appropriate attire at work, and questions and complaints that cannot be handled to the employee's satisfaction by his or her supervisor or manager should be taken to the Personnel Office.

**PENALTY** - If an employee dresses inappropriately, he or she will be counseled by a supervisor or manager. If the clothing is unduly distracting or unsafe, the employee may be sent home without pay to change clothes. Repeated disregard for the dress policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

**EXAMPLES OF UNACCEPTABLE ATTIRE** - tight or form fitting clothing, revealing, sheer or see-through clothing, dirty, faded or torn clothing, clothing with messages, slogans or pictures (except Kent County logo), military camouflage, tee-shirts, jogging suits, micro mini-skirts, shorts, skorts, leggings, culottes, overalls, sweat pants, capri pants, flip flops, sneakers, slippers, spike heels, army boots, hats, caps, visible body piercing excluding earrings, etc.

**EXCEPTIONS** - It is recognized from time to time the weather or nature of work clearly justifies a departure from the guidelines. An employee may deviate from such standards for the duration of the work assignment, only with prior approval of the Department Head. Reasonable accommodation shall be made on the basis of religious based or medically justified needs. Department Heads may require certain employees due to the nature of their duties to meet a higher standard of dress.