

Dress Down Days/ Summer Attire Policy

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When to Use This Policy

Adopting a Dress Down Days/Summer Attire Policy is an inexpensive way to boost employee morale. Having such a policy allows employees to work comfortably and can also attract employees by serving as a symbol that the employer cares about the well-being and happiness of all its employees.

Below is a model policy that should be further tailored to fit the employer's specific needs

Dress Down Days/Summer Attire Policy

[Enter Employer Name] wants employees to feel comfortable when coming to work, but not all clothing is appropriate even on Dress Down Days or during the summer. The following policy is meant to provide guidelines for when more casual clothing will be allowed, and what types of clothing are permitted. Employees should familiarize themselves with this policy and ask a supervisor if they have any more specific questions on what is, and is not, permitted.

- **Dress Down Days** - Designated days will be posted every month during which employees can dress down when coming to work. Employees should use their own discretion and if they have to meet important clients or attend corporate functions, more formal clothing should be worn. Generally, business casual attire is appropriate for all employees on these days.
- **Summer Attire** - [Enter Employer Name] allows employees to dress more casually in the summer months in an effort to limit the discomfort that employees may face from commuting in the heat. Summer attire is appropriate only from Memorial Day to Labor Day and should not be worn before or after those dates. Sundresses, midriff baring tops, spaghetti strap tank tops, and short shorts, or any other excessively revealing clothing as normally worn to the beach, however, is never appropriate for a professional setting. Similarly, flip-flops or other sandals will not be permitted. Short sleeved dresses without stockings are acceptable, as are golf shirts for men and khaki pants.
- **Types of Clothing Not Permitted** - Clothing that the employee would normally wear to the beach, to workout, to do yard work, or similar activities will never be appropriate for work and the professional setting. This includes, but is not limited to, yoga pants, gym shorts, and beach cover-ups. Employees are expected to use their common sense in deciding what to wear.

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■ **Condition of Clothing** - Even on casual days, clothing should not be wrinkled, torn, dirty or frayed.

Any clothing that has words, phrases, or pictures that may be offensive to other employees, including political or religious messages, or profanity, is absolutely not permitted at any time.

■ **Disciplinary Measures** - Supervisors have the right to determine if an employee's clothing choice is appropriate. Generally, if an employee has any doubt about something, the employee should either not wear the clothing, or should speak to a supervisor before wearing it. Any employee who violates this policy for the first time will be warned, counseled, and sent home to change clothing. Non-exempt employees will have this time charged to their accrued personal days. Subsequent violations of this policy may lead to increased discipline, up to, and including, termination.

This is only a general overview of acceptable work attire, it is not an all-inclusive list, and it is subject to change. No dress code can cover all situations, and so if an employee has any questions, the employee should consult with a supervisor.

Tips

The employer may want to have every Friday or occasional Fridays designated as a Dress Down Day. Whichever day the employer chooses to designate should be as easy to remember as possible. If there is confusion about which day is Dress Down Day, employees may unintentionally violate the policy.

The days when employees are allowed to wear summer attire should be modified based on the location of the employer and the variations in temperature. The employer may want to modify the above policy, which is best suited for an office environment, if, for example, employees interact regularly with customers or perform manufacturing jobs.

As this policy may be difficult for supervisors or managers to implement, the employer may want to hold special training sessions for supervisory personnel so that they understand how best to discourage an employee from wearing certain things to work and what disciplinary procedures to implement if dress code infractions continue. It should be stressed to supervisors that when handling employee dress code issues and violations, supervisors should be as sensitive and professional as possible.

Warning

The more detail that the employer can include in its policy, the less problems that the employer will face when seeking to enforce the policy. Supervisors will have an easier time enforcing the policy and employees will know exactly what they can and cannot wear. If the employer finds that too many individuals are violating the policy, the employer may want to rethink permitting Dress Down Days and summer attire. It may be easier to manage employees who are not complying with the policy, by eliminating the policy altogether. Employees should understand that its existence is a privilege.

All casual clothing is not suitable for the workplace, so it is important to strictly detail what will and will not be tolerated. Employers should not let infractions go unnoticed at the risk of undermining the entire policy. Employers should designate someone in HR whom employees can go to if they have questions about interpretation of the policy. Discipline should begin with warnings and then move to more severe disciplinary measures.

Any disciplinary measures that are applied should be applied in a consistent and equal manner. The employer may be subject to liability if a dress code policy is not applied uniformly to all employees.

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