

United States Pretrial Services Agency
Central District of California

Dress Code Policy

INTRODUCTION

Appropriateness of appearance and professional dress are an important part of our responsibilities as employees of the Federal Court. All of our offices are located in courthouses and, as such, we could interact at anytime with judges, court staff, and other professionals. Therefore, all staff are expected to dress in a conservative and professional manner in keeping with the decorum of the Federal Court.

Supervisors are charged with ensuring that staff are aware of and comply with prescribed standards of professional dress and appearance. As a matter of flexibility, dress code regulations are adjusted in accordance with varying work activities of staff. It is important that staff dress in a manner appropriate to their work activities and that they are always prepared to meet court appearance standards.

DRESS REGULATIONS

All Staff – Inappropriate Attire

The following are generally not considered appropriate for our professional working environment, whether for females or males:

- exposed backs
- excessively short dresses or skirts
- excessively baggy pants
- excessively tight clothing
- excessively low-cut necklines
- spaghetti straps (bare or off the shoulder)
- exposed midriffs
- T-shirts
- stretch pants or workout wear
- sheer tops or see-through blouses (unless worn with a camisole)
- jeans
- styles considered so extreme as to be considered out of the norm for a professional environment
- some outerwear, such as sweatshirts or fleece jackets

All Staff -- Unacceptable Trends

- No exposed or otherwise visible tattoos that would be considered extreme or not in keeping with a law enforcement position or the decorum of the Federal Court. Exposed, discreet tattoos, e.g., small flowers or a tasteful design, might be acceptable. Since tastes vary, the acceptability of a tattoo will be left to the supervisor, and ultimately to the Chief if there is a controversy. If you are planning on getting a tattoo, it is recommended you talk to your supervisor first to see if it would be considered acceptable.

- no body piercings (except pierced ears of females, displaying tasteful earrings)
- any extreme fad

All Staff – Appropriate Attire

Females

- business suit (skirt or slacks and jacket with coordinating blouse or top, or matching sweater set)
- business dress
- dress shoes, as deemed appropriate

Female support staff are not required to wear suits, but must wear professional looking slacks with a coordinating blouse or sweater with dress shoes or any of the attire listed above.

It is expected that skirts will be no higher than approximately two inches above the knee. The length of slacks should not be shorter than to the top of the ankle.

Males

Appropriate attire for court appearances:

- business suit
- sports jacket and coordinating slacks
- long or short sleeve shirt and tasteful/professional tie
- dress shoes or dress boots
- socks

Male officers are not required to wear a tie, but must have one available at all times, along with a jacket, if needed for court or another formal venue.

Male support staff are not required to wear a suit or tie, but must wear professional-looking slacks with coordinating shirt or sweater and dress shoes.

Field Work

See separate Field Day Policy in the Policy Section of our Intranet Site, which addresses field attire.

Miscellaneous

A number of people wear tennis shoes, or something similar, from the parking structure, the bus, train, etc. to the office. They may also be worn to pick up or deliver items (e.g., between HQ and the Roybal Investigation Unit and during the lunch break when going out of the building, etc.).

However, if a document has to be delivered to a Judge's chambers or to the courtroom, staff should change to dress shoes before entering. In the office, tennis shoes shall be replaced by dress shoes during normal business hours (8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.). They may be worn before and after normal business

hours. It should be noted that business shoes should be appropriately shined and be kept free of excessive scuffs and other obvious wear and tear.

A staff member may request to wear an alternative style of shoe due to a stated existing medical condition. The request should be discussed with the supervisor, who may request documentation of the medical need (e.g., physician's statement), which may need to be updated periodically. Final approval is at the discretion of the CUSPSO.

Training (in-district/out-of-district programs, seminars, workshops, conferences, etc.)

Unless otherwise specified, the proper attire for training is business professional or business casual, depending on the event. Prior to attending event, the employee shall determine the accepted or recommended attire. This information is normally given in advance as part of the literature about the event.

Policy Summary

This policy does not seek to cause staff discomfort in making the sometimes difficult and challenging choices of purchasing and wearing appropriate work-related attire. In fact, this policy is meant to ease such tasks. It is the agency's intention that standards for professional dress, as well as allowable exceptions, be clear and understood.

Staff should also understand that the agency's management recognizes that sporadic "unintentional" violations of the dress code can certainly happen. In such an instance, the staff member will likely be appropriately reminded of policy requirements. It is the repeated violations (or one-time obvious violation), however, that can be deemed as "intentional." In such instances, staff may be directed to return home for a change to appropriate clothing. Annual leave would be charged for the absence. Careful observance of the policy standards, however, should prevent problems from occurring. Finally, if you are unsure whether an item of clothing is appropriate or not, request guidance from your supervisor to avoid problems.

Revised: May 2016