

STANDARDS OF DRESS AND GROOMING

PURPOSE

This policy outlines the expectations of the County of Monmouth regarding employee dress code and appearance/grooming. The appropriateness of dress and grooming has an impact on how the professionalism, positive image, and public service of employees is perceived by the public. Employees are expected to exercise common sense and good judgement that aligns with professional and appropriate workplace conduct and apply that to how they dress and groom.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees, including full-time, part-time, seasonal staff, and interns. Management and supervisory staff are responsible for assuring that all employees adhere to this policy and that remediation and appropriate progressive disciplinary action are recommended and enforced when there is a violation of this policy. If applicable, additional dress and grooming standards may be communicated at the departmental level, based upon the standards of the services provided and with the approval of the County Administrator or designee.

POLICY

Monmouth County expects all employees to conduct themselves in a way that protects the interest and safety of the County, employees, business associates, and members of the public, which extends to clothing and grooming.

- Clothing – Every Monmouth County employee is expected to dress in appropriate workplace attire, including the following:
 - Business suits
 - Dress/suit pants, skirts
 - Dresses
 - Blouses
 - Sweaters
 - Collared shirts
 - Dress shirts
- Except as noted or approved by the Department Director for business purposes, employees may not wear the following:
 - Jeans of any color
 - Overalls/coveralls
 - Shorts
 - Miniskirts/minidresses

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- Athletic wear
 - Leggings
 - Sleepwear/visible undergarments
 - T-shirts/Jerseys that contain logos or graphics not appropriate to the workplace (e.g. Sports teams, political messaging)
 - Any articles of clothing with logos or graphics that express or promote hate, racism, violence, drug use, gang activity, profanity, or may create a hostile or abusive work environment for anyone
 - Clothing that is too revealing (e.g. tank tops, midriffs, halter tops, see-through, or fishnet items)
- All clothing is expected to be clean, in good repair, and properly fitted.
 - Footwear & Accessories – All footwear is expected to be appropriate to the employee’s position. Shoes are to be neat, clean, and in good repair.
 - Sandals of any material that are commonly referred to as flip-flops, thongs, slides, slippers, or beach shoes are prohibited.
 - Sneakers/athletic shoes may be designated as appropriate for some positions as determined by the service provided and authorized by the Department Director.
 - Hats – No baseball caps, hats, or bandanas are permitted in the workplace except as approved by the County Administrator or designee.
 - Tattoos – Except as noted or approved by the County Administrator or designee, guidelines related to tattoos are as follows:
 - Tattoos on the head, face, and neck shall be covered.
 - All other tattoos may be visible so long as they do not depict images or words that promote drug use, gang activity, hate, racism, profanity, violence, or that may create a hostile or abusive work environment.
 - Reasonable effort must be made to cover any nonconforming tattoos when providing service directly to a member of the public.
 - Jewelry – All jewelry worn by employees must be appropriate and reasonable, so it does not detract from a professional appearance or constitute a health or safety hazard.
 - Nose piercings are permitted if the jewelry is the size of a two-millimeter (2mm) stud or smaller.
 - All other facial piercings jewelry is prohibited. Any nonconforming piercing insert shall be removed, covered, or replaced with a clear insert while in the workplace.

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- Personal Hygiene – Personal hygiene and grooming is essential. All employees must maintain a clean and presentable appearance, which includes cleanliness of self and appropriate oral hygiene.
 - Strong odors caused by perfumes, aftershave lotions, etc., can be offensive and should be used in moderation.
 - Well-groomed hairstyles and facial hair should be arranged so as not to interfere with the safe execution of duties and responsibilities. Hair color should be within a reasonable range of natural colors.
- County Identification – All Monmouth County employees are issued a County identification badge and are required to wear the badge while on duty with the photo side facing out, except where specifically exempted or prohibited by the Department Director due to safety issues.

GUIDANCE ABOUT UNPROFESSIONAL ATTIRE

Select clothing communicates a professional demeanor. As a rule, if there is a question whether something would be appropriate to wear, do not wear it. Clothing that would normally be worn on the weekend while lounging, doing yardwork, or similar activities, is not appropriate for the workplace. Attire that is considered unprofessional for the workplace includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- **Dirty or wrinkled clothes.** Clothes should be clean and unwrinkled. Avoid wearing stained clothing or clothes with holes/tears. Shoes should be clean and in good condition.
- **Tight or revealing clothing.** Plunging necklines, midriff or crop tops, sheer fabrics, miniskirts and minidresses do not belong in the workplace. A man's unbuttoned shirt should not show off his chest or chest hair.
- **Clothing that is too casual.** Clothing that is considered too casual includes:
 - T-shirts and shorts
 - Ripped clothing
 - Any athletic wear (e.g. shorts, skorts, yoga pants, jogging suits, sweatpants, and sweatshirts)
 - Leggings worn as pants
 - Sports jerseys or tank tops
 - Clothing with inappropriate illustrations, advertising, or large logos
 - Slippers, Crocs, flip flops, slides, Birkenstock style sandals, or sneakers

This section of the policy is not exhaustive; it is meant to provide examples and guidance. It is expected that all employees will use good judgement when planning their workplace attire.

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COMPLIANCE

Each employee will receive an electronic copy of this policy and will be required to electronically sign and acknowledge via the self-service portal verifying that the policy has been read and understood.

Supervisors are responsible for explaining and enforcing the dress and grooming standards.

Employees who report to duty and are non-compliant with the dress and grooming policy may be sent home to change without compensation or leave time.

Failure to comply with, and repeated violations of, this policy may be cause for disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Department Directors may request an exception to this policy due to the nature of the work, special events, and departmental clean-up days. Any recommendations to deviate from this policy is subject to review and approval by the County Administrator or designee.

Moreover, any employee who requires a reasonable accommodation based on religion, disability, or other grounds protected by federal, state, or local laws should contact Human Resources. The County of Monmouth prohibits any form of discipline, reprisal, or retaliation for requesting a reasonable accommodation for grounds protected by federal, state, or local law.