

**VIRGINIA BEACH DEPARTMENT OF Human Services**

**Administrative Instruction Title: Dress Code**

**Index Number: 1.22**

**Date of Adoption: August 20, 2007**

**Date of Review/Revision: N/A**

**1. Background and Purpose:**

We are a professional human services agency dealing with many individuals in the community who are experiencing significant life stresses. It is important for all staff to reflect a professional demeanor when providing services in the office, in the community, or in any service settings.

**2. Policy:**

a. Employees are expected to present a neat, clean and well-groomed professional appearance at all times regardless of their job location or job responsibilities.

b. Appropriate business attire is expected for staff meetings with members of City Council, the City Manager's Office, City Attorney's Office, members of the Courts system or while representing the Department of Human Services when meeting with local, state and federal agencies, community groups, organizations, and businesses. Appropriate attire includes slacks, coat, tie and dress shoes with socks for the men; dress or pant suit with jacket and close toed shoes for the women.

c. An acceptable and desired length of skirts and dresses should be no more than 3 to 4 inches above the knee.

d. Personal listening devices such as MP3s, I-Pods or Bluetooths, will not be worn during working hours, unless issued by the Department for work purposes. Personal listening devices may be used during an employee's break or lunch period only.

e. Employees are expected to wear their identification badge at all times unless doing so presents a safety hazard. City Administrative Directive 1.14 addresses specific requirements for the wearing of identification badges.

f. Jewelry and body piercing may be worn when it does not present a safety hazard and does not interfere with employee's ability to perform job duties. Belly button jewelry will be covered by clothing; however, jewelry on the tongue and face are prohibited.

g. Length of fingernails should not interfere with assigned tasks or responsibilities and not create a safety hazard for either clients or other staff.

h. Body art (tattoos) must be covered during working hours.

i. Hair must be neatly groomed and hair color, if chemically treated, must be a normal hair color (no blue, orange, pink, etc.)

j. Ball caps, bandanas, sweatbands, sleep caps, stocking caps, etc., are not to be worn during working hours (when applicable, kitchen and maintenance staff will wear appropriate head gear for safety). Head accessories such as scarves, wraps, bands or turbans may be worn in a neat and fashionable style.

k. Other examples of inappropriate attire:

1) Apparel of any kind with inappropriate language, art or advertisements that can be seen.

2) Shorts and t-shirts of any kind including tank tops, midriff tops, and other revealing apparel.

3) Apparel of any kind or color made of denim and stirrup pants or leggings.

4) Shoes: any type of athletic footwear such as tennis, walking, aerobic; any type of flip-flops with or without designs, heeled or flat; sandals such as casual beach, all-terrain, athletic, or thong. (A dress sandal with heel or pump of a fashionable modest style may be worn.)

5) Altered clothing such as cut-offs, including items that are faded, torn or has holes, whether manufactured or purposefully hand made are prohibited.

6) All athletic attire (warm-up or wind suits) of any fabric type (including, but not limited to): Sweatshirts, sweatpants, casual jogging outfits, pullovers, hooded or zipper tops with or without matching bottoms.

l. Employees who work in a non-traditional office environment will dress appropriately to the type of duties performed and as approved by the Supervisor and/or Division Director.

**3. Procedure:**

a. Dress Code Variance

1) Employees may seek an exception to the dress code through the Supervisor and/or Division Director based upon non-traditional job responsibilities or medical issues/concerns.

2) Attachment 1 will be used to request a variance through the Supervisor whose recommendation will be forwarded for action by the Division Director. The Dress Code Variance Form can also be found on BEACHnet on the Personnel Webpage.

3) A copy of the completed request will be maintained in the employee's personnel file.

b. Disciplinary Guidelines:

1) Employees wearing inappropriate attire and in conflict with the dress code set forth will be given the opportunity to comply by either removing the offending item immediately or may be sent home to correct the infraction. If time away from the worksite is taken, Annual Leave (if available) or Leave Without Pay will be charged. The employee will be counseled as to the consequences of continued disregard for department policy.

2) If the employee commits a second offense, the Supervisor will issue a written counseling memo and require the employee to comply with the dress code as stated in Section 3(b)(1).

3) If a third offense occurs, in addition to the actions described in Section 3(b)(1), a written reprimand will be issued. See the DHS Personnel webpage ([Guidelines for Completing Employee Reprimands](#)) on BEACHnet for clarification.

4) Subsequent Offenses: Continued disregard for department policy will result in further disciplinary actions up to and including dismissal.

**4. Responsibility and Authority:**

a. Supervisors are responsible for the implementation of this Administrative Instruction and will follow the disciplinary guidelines above to correct infractions.

b. The Division Director will be advised when an offense results in an employee reprimand. The Division Director will determine the next course of disciplinary action based on the advice provided by the Supervisor.

**5. Closing Statement:**

Supervisors and Division Directors will work with staff to answer any questions regarding the interpretation of this Administrative Instruction.

APPROVED:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Terry S. Jenkins, Ph.D.  
DIRECTOR

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DRESS CODE VARIANCE FORM

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

TO: \_\_\_\_\_, Division Director

VIA: \_\_\_\_\_, Division Supervisor

FROM: \_\_\_\_\_

SUBJECT: Dress Code Variance Authorization

1. Explain rationale for the requested variance from the dress code:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Describe proposed variance:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Effective dates: From: \_\_\_\_\_ To: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor's Recommendation:  Yes  No

Supervisor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Division Director's Approval:  Yes  No

Division Director's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Copy to Employee Personnel File: Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Initials: \_\_\_\_\_