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SECRETARIAL DIRECTIVE

SUBJECT: Dress Code for Non-Uniformed Personnel

NUMBER: 2020-04

SUPERSEDES: 2020-01

APPLICABILITY: All Department of Corrections Non-Uniform Employees

REFERENCE: Ark. Code Ann. §§ 25-43-105,
25-43-108, and 25-43-403

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ISSUED BY: Wendy Kelley

EFFECTIVE DATE: 4/1/2020

I. POLICY:

It is the policy of the Department of Corrections to establish and monitor standards for employees' dress to reflect a professional appearance for the organization.

II. PURPOSE:

To ensure that the Departments non-uniformed employees dress in a professional manner as outlined in the dress code.

III. PROCEDURES:

Professional Dress Code Guidance - All non-uniform employees must wear clothing that is appropriate for their job and work site. Clothing and appearance should be neat, clean, in good business taste, and must not constitute a safety hazard. This agency is a professional organization that interfaces with other state agencies, the business community and the public. Employees must project a professional public image.

In keeping the Department's intention to maintain a dignified business atmosphere, extreme or unkept hairstyles and distracting bodily accessories are not permitted. Jewelry should be modest and professional. Personal grooming and cleanliness must be maintained to present a clean appearance, with contemporary hairstyles, nail polish, and makeup consistent with the professional business world.

Examples of acceptable attire include, but are not limited to:

- Business suits, blouses, shirts, skirts, pants, ties, dresses
- Sweaters
- Shirts with collars
- Slacks and trousers
- Sports jackets and blazers
- Footwear designed for business purposes
- Dress sandals, dress wedges, or dress heels

Examples of unacceptable attire include, but are not limited to:

- Clothing with a printed message, slogan, political messages, picture or art depicting drugs, alcohol, smoking, sex, weapons, violence, or a message that is inflammatory, obscene, disrespectful, or potentially disruptive within a correctional environment;
- Dresses or blouses that are backless, strapless, sleeveless or have spaghetti straps unless such garments are covered by another article of clothing (sweater or jacket);
- Tank or muscle tops and crop tops unless such garments are covered by another article of clothing (sweater or jacket);
- Sheer or mesh clothing that exposes undergarments or midriffs or any clothing with exposed undergarments;
- Camouflage apparel;
- Miniskirts, defined as skirts above the knee or revealing the upper thigh;
- Athletic or tennis shoes, flip-flops or thong sandals (see description below);
- Hooded sweatshirts;
- Jeans or denim pants of any color, unless authorized by the Division Director;
- Shorts of any kind; or
- Costumes of any kind.

Safety Issues - Employees must not wear clothing that is unsafe. Accessories such as rings, necklaces, bracelets, and earrings must not present a potential safety hazard.

Division Directors may institute more stringent dress requirements for reasons of safety.

Legislative and other High-Profile Events - Employees attending meetings at the State Capitol, Governor's Office, with a Committee of the General Assembly, or other high-profile events must follow a "formal business" dress code as outlines below:

Men-must either wear business suits with neckties or wear sports coats or blazers with neckties, slacks or dress khakis and dress shoes.

Women-must wear business dresses or suits or jackets, sweaters or blouses with either slacks or professional skirts of modest length. Necklines and footwear must be modest and appropriate for business.

Personal Cleanliness - Employees are expected to practice good personal hygiene, select attire that is clean and in good repair, and present a professional image. Hair, including facial hair (beards, mustaches, sideburns), is expected to be well-groomed and clean, while neatly pressed clothing appropriate to the job is to be worn on duty. Hairstyles, clothing and jewelry are to conform to business, professional and departmental standards. Hair color should not be of an unnatural color. In addition, each employee is expected to shower and/or bathe daily and to attend to their personal hygiene as part of their professional appearance as an employee of the Department of Corrections.

Piercings and Tattoos - Items such as eyebrow, nose, tongue, and lip rings or studs are not to be worn on duty. Torso body piercings with visible jewelry that can be seen through or under clothing are not to be worn on duty. No offensive tattoos shall be visible while an employee is on duty. The term offensive tattoo includes any tattoo which might cause a negative reaction from staff or offenders. This includes, without limitation, any tattoo depicting a symbol or image associated with gang affiliation.

Revealing Attire - Employees are not permitted to wear revealing attire, (i.e. low-cut blouses and exposed cleavage), clothing that is too tight, bare midriff blouses, or hip-hugger. Athletic clothing, shorts, tank tops, sweatpants, undershirts, hats or logoed t-shirts are not acceptable.

Clothing and Footwear - Clothing and footwear should be appropriate to the workplace in terms of appearance and employee safety. Clothing that is frayed or has holes is not appropriate apparel. Pants/slacks must be hemmed and of a length that does not drag the floor.

Footwear must be selected for safety and comfort and be otherwise acceptable for a correctional environment. Thong sandals and flip-flops are not acceptable footwear. Thong sandals or flip-flops are defined as a backless shoe made of rubber or leather (or a similar material), plain or embellished with beads, etc., consisting of a sole held loosely on the foot by a v-shaped strap, that passes between the first (big) and second toes and around either side of the foot.

Exceptions - The maintenance, construction, mailroom, farm, industry, and information systems staff that install equipment or do other physical labor, and any employee on special assignment as determined by the Division Director, shall wear clothing suitable to their jobs and to their worksite. An exception may also be granted based upon a medical or health condition; however, the request must be reviewed and receive prior approval by the Warden/Center Supervisor, Area Manager, or Administrator.

Failure to Comply - Supervisors shall have the discretion to determine whether attire is unprofessional. Supervisors shall provide guidance as to proper attire and grooming. Supervisor must send an employee who reports to work in violation of established dress requirements home with instructions to change and return to work. The employee will be required to use annual leave. Continued dress code violations may result in disciplinary action.