



CITY OF PROVIDENCE

APPEARANCE POLICY

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear guidelines regarding appropriate dress and appearance for employees of the City of Providence. The City values professionalism, inclusivity, and safety in the workplace, and this policy aims to ensure that employees present themselves in a manner that reflects the City's standards of conduct, fosters a positive work environment, and promotes respect for colleagues and the public.

Scope

This policy applies to all full-time, part-time, temporary, and contract employees of the City of Providence. It covers dress and appearance expectations while at work, during business hours, when representing the City in external settings.

Nothing in this policy shall supersede, modify, or diminish any rights, benefits, or obligations contained within applicable collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) or laws. In the event of a conflict between this policy and a CBA, the CBA shall prevail for covered employees. For all other employees not covered by a CBA, this policy shall govern.

Policy

This policy is designed to help provide consistent professional appearance guidelines. Our appearance reflects on ourselves and the City of Providence. The goal is to be sure that we maintain a positive appearance and not offend colleagues, constituents, or clients.

1. **General Guidelines:**

A. **Professional Appearance:**

1. Employees are expected to dress in a manner that is professional, neat, clean, and appropriate for their job responsibilities and work environment. Clothing should not be disruptive to the work environment.
2. Directors and supervisors have discretion to deviate from this policy to set dress codes specific to their department and its functions in compliance with this policy and the applicable collective bargaining agreement for its employees.
3. Clothing or other attire endorsing a political candidate or campaign are not permissible while at work or representing the City.

B. **Job-Specific Requirements:**

1. The appropriate type of clothing may vary depending on the nature of the employee's job. Employees who have jobs that involve physical labor, fieldwork, or public-facing roles may have different expectations for dress than those in office-based positions.
2. Employees who are issued uniforms are required to always wear the issued uniform while on duty and may not alter the uniform unless the alteration, such as the addition of a patch or decorative pin, is vetted and approved by the City and is in compliance with the standards of the department and the applicable collective bargaining agreement (CBA).
3. Additionally, employees who are issued personal protective equipment are bound by the City and departmental policies related thereto.

C. **Personal Hygiene:**

Employees should maintain proper hygiene to ensure a clean and pleasant working environment



CITY OF PROVIDENCE

for themselves and others. This encourages employees to manage personal grooming in a way that supports a professional atmosphere and appearance.

2. **Specific Dress Code Guidelines:**

A. **Business Casual Attire (Office-based Roles):**

Employees in office-based roles at a minimum are generally expected to wear business casual attire unless otherwise specified by their department.

1. Acceptable business casual attire includes:
 1. Collared shirts (polo or button-up) and blouses.
 2. Slacks, khakis, skirts, or dresses.
 3. Professional shoes (e.g., flats, low heels, dress shoes).
 4. Sweaters or cardigans as appropriate for climate conditions.
2. Unacceptable business casual attire includes:
 1. Short shorts, Halter or tank tops, sweatsuits or exercise attire, bare midriffs, cutoffs, flip flops or T-shirts without a collar.
 2. T-shirts with offensive, inappropriate, or controversial graphics or messages.
 3. Clothing with distressing or excessive fading unless part of a designated casual Friday or department policy.

B. **Casual Attire (Field or Public-Facing Roles):**

Employees working in field-based, operational, or public-facing roles may be permitted to wear more casual attire, provided that it is appropriate for the work environment and safety requirements.

1. Acceptable casual attire includes:
 1. Uniforms or workwear as provided or mandated by the department.
 2. Comfortable, weather-appropriate clothing (e.g., durable pants, work shirts, and comfortable shoes).
 3. Closed-toed shoes or boots that provide adequate safety for the work environment.
2. Unacceptable attire includes:
 1. Clothing with offensive or inappropriate language, logos, or imagery.
 2. Sandals, open-toed shoes, or high heels if they pose a safety risk.
 3. Clothing that is excessively torn, stained, or damaged prior to the normal wear of work is performed as ordinary and custom to the job performed (e.g., before work, after work).

3. **Safety Gear and Uniforms:**

Certain positions require specific safety gear or uniforms, which should be worn at all times while performing work duties.

A. These may include:

1. Protective gear such as helmets, gloves, high-visibility vests, or safety boots for field employees.
2. Department-issued uniforms, if applicable, that are to be worn during working hours. Employees are expected to maintain safety gear and uniforms in good condition and adhere to all safety-related dress guidelines.

4. **Religious or Cultural Dress:**

The City of Providence recognizes and respects the diverse cultural and religious backgrounds of its employees. Religious or cultural attire, such as headscarves, turbans, or kippahs, is permitted and should be accommodated in the workplace. Employees are encouraged to discuss any specific dress



CITY OF PROVIDENCE

needs with their supervisor or the Department of People and Culture to ensure an inclusive environment.

5. **Personal Grooming and Tattoos:**

Personal grooming and appearance should be neat, professional, and not distract from work responsibilities. Employees are expected to maintain a well-groomed appearance. This includes:

- A. Hair should be neat and clean.
- B. Tattoos and body piercings may be visible, provided they do not contain offensive or inappropriate imagery. Supervisors may request that tattoos be covered if deemed disruptive, offensive, or unprofessional.
- C. Fragrances and perfumes should be used sparingly, as strong scents may affect co-workers with allergies or sensitivities.

6. **Special Events or Business Travel:**

Employees attending external meetings, conferences, or events on behalf of the City should dress in accordance with the professional standards of the City and the event. Employees may be required to dress in formal business attire for such events, especially when representing the City in a public-facing role.

7. **Requests for Accommodation**

Employees who require accommodations due to medical, religious, or other protected reasons should contact Department of People and Culture – OSHA and/or Employee Experience to discuss reasonable adjustments to the dress code policy. The City of Providence is committed to providing an inclusive and equitable work environment for all employees.

8. **Compliance**

- A. Employees who fail to adhere to the appearance policy and its guidelines will be counseled to adjust their attire to meet the standards. Employees in violation are expected to immediately correct the issue.
- B. Employees may be sent home to change their attire or remediate their circumstances in accordance with city and departmental standards.
- C. Repeated or serious violations of the appearance policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including corrective action and termination, depending on the nature of the violation.

Related Policies:

Discipline Policy
Workplace Cleanliness Policy
Code of Conduct
Discipline Policy
Open Door Policy

Other Related Information:

Local 1033 [Collective Bargaining Agreement](#)