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### **OC Register Q&A – Summer Dress Code**

**Q:** We are thinking about making the workplace attire casual for the summer. What would be an appropriate appearance policy and what is required?

**A:** Allowing employees to dress more casually in the summer is a great benefit to offer, giving a big boost for morale, and at no-cost to the employer.

In the event that workplace attire changes, it is important to write a comprehensive dress policy so that employees are aware of what attire your company believes to be acceptable for the workplace. This way, if an employee needs to be counseled or disciplined for inappropriate attire, you have a policy upon which to rely. It's also important that you specify the dates that the dress policy change begins and ends. The policy change should be an addendum to your handbook, if you have one, and signed by each employee that they've received notice of the policy change and that they understand it.

Specifically, you'll want to include a summary statement of the policy change i.e., who, what, where, why; effective dates of policy change; and what the consequences for non-adherence to the policy are. You might also want to include some examples of what is acceptable or non-acceptable attire. Some suggestions of what is business casual are: shirts or blouses with collars; pressed slacks or pants; skirts, culottes, or dresses (with hosiery if above mid-calf), shoes with socks or hosiery if open-toed. Unacceptable attire might include: shorts, sweat pants/shirts, wind suits, stretch pants, or "capri" pants. Additional, if you require employees to wear business attire in certain situations, i.e., meetings or sales calls, you should state that as well. You also need to consider appropriate attire for employees in safety-sensitive positions.

Note: Effective 2004, you may not specify appropriate clothing styles by gender.

- Written by Audrienne Adams