



# ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

**SUBJECT: PROFESSIONAL WORK ENVIRONMENT**

**NO. HR 31.0**

**Revised: August 28, 2014**

## **I. PURPOSE**

This procedure defines dress, personal appearance, and office environment guidelines in order to promote a positive, professional work environment and to further enhance the reputation of City employees, and the work that employees do in the community.

## **II. SCOPE**

This procedure applies to all City employees, contractor employees, consultants and/or their employees, temporary employees, temporary leased staff, and student interns, while working on City premises and/or representing the City during business hours, and while on City business. Uniformed fire and police personnel governed by a collective bargaining agreement, departmental rules and/or state legislation are excluded.

The standards addressed in this procedure are a general overview of acceptable professional dress for regular work hours. It is not completely comprehensive nor does it apply to employees who wear uniforms or whose job duties are inconsistent with the content of this procedure as determined by the respective Director. Those employees are to follow uniform standards for their department. This procedure should, however, serve as a general guideline for employees to make choices that are consistent with the City's professional business image.

## **III. STANDARDS**

### **Dress and Appearance**

As representatives of the City of Corpus Christi, employees must recognize that their appearance is a direct reflection of the level of professionalism in the organization. For this reason, employees shall follow these basic minimum standards in regard to dress and personal appearance.

- While the essential functions of an employee's job may not involve direct contact with the public, being housed in a building where members of the public visit constitutes direct contact. Employees in an office environment will dress in a manner that is in keeping with accepted standards of professional office attire. Athletic clothing and spandex garments, unless job-related or specifically designated, are not appropriate. Professional appearance requires clothing and accessories to be neat, clean, pressed, without tears or holes, and appropriate to the type of work, special assignments, or locations you encounter each day. In addition, professional appearance requires good grooming and personal hygiene.
- Executive staff and other employees who, in their capacity as a City employee, make presentations at City Council meetings will wear formal business attire consisting of a suit, or slacks and a dress shirt with tie and sport coat for men, and a dress, suit, pant suit, or slacks or skirt with blouse and jacket for women. Formal business attire is also appropriate wear when representing the City at a public forum either inside or outside of the City, unless casual business attire is called for. Executive staff, if designated by the City Manager, may wear attire based on what is appropriate for the season and meeting purpose.
- Non-uniformed employees in non-office positions should dress suitably for their work environment as established by their respective Department Director.
- This procedure does not apply to employees who are required to wear uniforms. Employees are required to adhere to uniform standards as set by their respective department. Employees are required to wear uniforms in an appropriate manner (shirt buttoned, sleeves not rolled up, etc.). City uniforms should be clean and well maintained. Employees are not authorized to wear the City-issued uniform while performing work for another employer, unless authorized by Department Director. Additionally, City uniforms, should not be worn while drinking or purchasing alcohol.
- Footwear and accessories should reflect the professional image. Shoes known as slippers, "Crocs" (or similar plastic clog design), water shoes, beach sandals, or flip-flops (including adorned flip-flop sandals), are not considered appropriate footwear for the office environment. The footwear listed above should never be worn during working hours. Dress sandals with a heel strap that do not present a hazard and are appropriate for office wear may be worn at the discretion of the Department Director.
- Workplace attire should reflect a professional image. Clothing such as halter tops, tank tops, strapless tops, tops with spaghetti straps, sweatshirts, sweatpants, wind suits, athletic clothing, spandex, leggings, shorts, skorts, and pants above mid-calf length are not appropriate.
- Employees must wear and display their Employee ID Badge at all times while on duty, unless it presents a safety hazard, given the nature of the job performed. Additionally, an Employee ID Badge should not be worn while drinking or purchasing alcohol.
- Clothing should not distract, be offensive, or reveal areas of the body such as abdomen, chest, upper thighs or buttocks areas.

- Clothing should not be excessively tight fitting or provocative, and skirt length should be appropriate for the office.
- Facial jewelry, defined as jewelry worn on the face, nose, eyebrows, eyelids, lips, tongue, etc., will not be worn by employees while on duty. Earrings worn in the earlobes are acceptable, so long as they meet the expectations of a professional image, and do not present a safety hazard, given the nature of the job.
- In general visible tattoos should be covered with clothing, makeup, or a bandage, however depending on the location, the Department Director may use their discretion and will evaluate the appropriateness and appearance of an employee's tattoos based on the position he/she holds, public contact, and department standards, so long as they meet expectations of a professional image.
- Directors may establish additional dress and personal appearance guidelines suitable for their work environment, job function and activity.
- Employees requiring an accommodation regarding dress should contact their Department Director.
- Business Casual Fridays will be allowed, unless specifically cancelled for a particular reason by the City Manager or his/her designee. All casual clothing, however, is not appropriate for the office. Keep in mind that your attire must continue to be consistent with the professional business image of the City.
  - For men, accepted casual business attire includes slacks, collared shirt with no tie, and collared knit shirt with or without a City/Department logo (e.g. golf or polo shirt).
  - For women, accepted casual business attire includes slacks, pants at mid-calf length, or skirt, blouse, and collared knit shirt with or without a City/Department logo (e.g. golf or polo shirt).
  - Sports shoes, such as tennis, basketball, walking, and/or running shoes, are not appropriate for business casual wear.
  - Jeans appropriate for the office will be allowed
  - Inappropriate items include, but are not limited to, the following:
    - jeans with holes, tears, fading, and/or frays, including ragged hems,
    - jeans of a "low rise" or "hip hugger" style,
    - jeans that include any kind of wording (other than the label), sparkles, rhinestones, etc.
    - sweatshirts, sweatpants, wind suits, or athletic wear,
    - spandex or leggings
    - shorts, or skorts,
    - halter tops, tank tops, strapless tops, and tops with spaghetti straps,
    - shoes known as thongs, slippers, "Crocs" or similar plastic clog design, water shoes, beach sandals, and flip-flops.

## Office Environment

The appearance of the work area and building also impacts the perception of professionalism of the City and its personnel. Disregard for the work environment can lead to a perception of poor customer service and can result in an unattractive, difficult to maintain facility.

Good judgment and professionalism are expected from all employees in all aspects of their work including presenting a professional appearance every day in the work place.

Guidelines for maintaining a professional office environment include:

- Staff responsible for greeting the public shall not eat at their work stations, or play a radio.
- Employees should be mindful of their surroundings and co-workers. If playing music, the volume should be kept at a point where it is only heard in their immediate area.
- Work areas and adjacent public areas should be kept neat and organized.

Additionally, hourly paid workers must take their lunch meal period away from their work station to ensure compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act regarding pay.

### **IV. CONSEQUENCES FOR VIOLATION OF THIS PROCEDURE**

Supervisors are responsible for interpreting and enforcing dress and grooming standards in their areas of responsibility. This includes counseling employees whose appearance or personal hygiene is inappropriate or offensive.

Employees wearing inappropriate attire will be directed by their supervisor not to wear the attire again and/or will be asked to go home and change into appropriate attire. Compensatory time, personal leave or vacation leave accrual, if available, will be charged for time away from work. If no time is on the books, the employee will be docked for the time away from work.

Failure to comply with this procedure may result in disciplinary action.

### **V. QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS PROCEDURE**

Questions regarding this procedure shall be directed to the Director of Human Resources, or designee, who may be contacted at 361/826-3315.