

Dear HR Knowledge, how do I implement a summer dress code policy?

With the warmer weather comes the desire for shorts and flip-flops. Many employers offer a variety of summertime benefits to keep employees productive and happy, and this often includes revisiting the dress code policy. To implement a summer dress policy, employers should decide what is appropriate for their organization and clearly communicate these expectations to all employees.

We recommend establishing a written dress and appearance policy to set expectations of the image your organization wants to convey. It is important to have a year-round policy, but it is even more essential during the summer months.

Here are a few questions and considerations for summer dress code policies:

1. When will this policy take effect? During a set time frame, such as Memorial Day to Labor Day, or as soon as the weather becomes warmer?
2. Will this policy apply to the entire week or just “casual Fridays”?
3. What constitutes a casual dress policy for your organization? How casual do you want to be? Will you allow shorts, tank tops, sleeveless shirts, T-shirts, flip-flops?
4. Will employees be required to abide by the standard dress policy when meeting with customers and/or clients?
5. How will a casual dress policy impact the culture? Try to strike a balance between your business needs and culture.
6. Consider safety issues and those employees who are in safety-sensitive positions.
7. How will you enforce the policy? It’s important to address concerns of inappropriate dress immediately. If an employee takes the casual dress policy too far, they should be taken aside privately and reminded of the dress code standards.

Once you have established the summer dress code policy, you need to communicate it. Consider introducing it at a staff meeting, followed up with an email or memorandum. Be sure to include what is permissible attire and what is prohibited, apart from religious-based exemptions. Clearly communicating dress code expectations can help maintain a respectful workplace.

With advanced planning and consideration, a summer dress policy can be a low-cost way to make a significant impact on morale and productivity.



About HR Knowledge

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