

## Motor Vehicle Division Administrative Memo # 16-01

### *Dress Code*

**DATE ISSUED:** August 1, 2016

**FROM:** Mark Lowe, Director, Motor Vehicle Division

**TO:** All Motor Vehicle Division staff

#### **SUBJECT**

This administrative memo establishes guidelines in regards to the Motor Vehicle Division dress code which applies to all employees that are not required to wear a uniform. Uniformed staff includes all sworn peace officers and driver's license examiners and clerk seniors, as well as other staff that may be required to wear uniforms in the future.

#### **EXPLANATION**

The purpose of this policy is to establish dress code guidelines for Motor Vehicle Division (MVD) employees that are not required to wear a uniform. This policy serves to provide clarification, and establish general guidelines and expectations that will help consistently guide our individual clothing choices.

#### **POLICY STATEMENT**

The goal of the Motor Vehicle Division's dress code is to allow employees to work and dress comfortably; give employees reasonable flexibility, affordability, and personal choice in fashion and clothing choices; maintain safety in all that we do; and maintain a professional image for customers and visitors.

#### **GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

There are too many clothing choices and types to list everything that's acceptable or unacceptable, and we won't attempt to do that in this dress code policy. Instead, it's our intent to institute general procedures and expectations that will help consistently guide our individual clothing choices. As you consider this dress code, follow these basic principles:

- **Exercise reasonable, adult judgment when making clothing choices.** Choices that are appropriate for a night out on the town or a concert may not be appropriate for the workplace.
- **Whatever choices we make, our clothes should always be clean and in good repair.** Good repair doesn't preclude clothes that are "distressed" according to the style of the day, but does preclude clothes that have fallen into poor condition and need repair.
- **Images or messages on our clothes should not be offensive or disparaging.** Much like we require for license plate images, images or messages on our clothes should not be vulgar, prejudiced, hostile, insulting, or racially, ethnically, or sexually degrading, and should not include profanity or references to alcohol, tobacco, or illegal substances or acts. That being said, the fact that clothes have images or messages on them does not preclude wearing them – clothing may have logos, pictures, or other words

on them, provided the logos, pictures, or words are within the guidelines set forth above. Sports team, university, and fashion brand names on clothing are generally acceptable, as is the Iowa DOT logo.

- **Our clothes should not impair our ability to do our jobs safely.** We should not wear clothes that will be unsafe for the surfaces, conditions, elements, and devices or machines we will be using, and all employees will require with Iowa DOT Policy No. 230.05, *Personal Protective Equipment* when performing work that requires personal protective equipment. You can review this policy at:

[http://portal/OperationsFinance/PolicyLegislative/DOT%20Policies%20and%20Procedures/230\\_05.pdf](http://portal/OperationsFinance/PolicyLegislative/DOT%20Policies%20and%20Procedures/230_05.pdf)

## HELPFUL QUESTION AND ANSWERS

The following questions and answers provide additional information that will be helpful to you.

### WHAT ARE THE DRESS STANDARDS WE WILL FOLLOW?

Our primary dress standard is *casual*, but because we have areas that serve the public and because we host meetings with visitors from outside the agency and attend meetings, conferences, hearings, and other events outside the agency, there will be times when the *business casual* and *business* standards apply. The following describes each of these standards.

- **Business.** Business is the most formal standard. Business generally means at least a collared shirt, tie, and slacks for men, and according to the expectations and practice of the setting may also include a coat/blazer or suit. For women, business means a blouse or nicer top and a skirt or slacks, or a nice dress, and again according to the expectations and practice of the setting may include a jacket or sweater.
- **Business Casual.** Business casual is an intermediary standard, and our interpretation of it might best be described as “relaxed” business casual. For men, business casual means a collared shirt that is tucked in and slacks, khakis, or nicer jeans. For women, business casual means a top (other than a t-shirt), skirt, slacks, khakis, capris, nicer jeans or a dress. Business casual includes sweaters, sweater vests, fleece jackets and vests, and similar wear appropriate for colder weather. Nicer jeans just means jeans that are in good repair and not well-worn.
- **Casual.** Casual includes everything in business casual, as well as untucked shirts and un-collared shirts (t-shirts), jeans, shorts (other than athletic shorts), and sweatshirts (hooded or unhooded). T-shirts worn by men must have sleeves and may not be tank tops. A note on shorts – we do not have a specific length or length marker, but they should not be revealing.

### WHEN SHOULD I WEAR EACH STANDARD?

The following guidelines provide examples on dress standards and applicable situations where standards apply.

- **Casual.** Our basic standard will be casual. You can wear casual wear any time you are not doing any of the following: visiting face-to-face customer service areas of the Iowa DOT (primarily driver’s license stations, the front service desk for the Office of Vehicle & Motor Carrier Services, and Motor Vehicle Enforcement weigh stations), attending in-house meetings that include visitors that are not members of the Iowa DOT, or attending meetings, hearings, conferences, or other events outside the Iowa DOT. (*Exception* – if casual wear is expected or the norm for all

persons attending the external event, then casual wear is permitted. See “What Should I Wear to External Events?” below).

- **Business.** As suggested by the discussion of business casual, business wear is required for external meetings, hearings, conferences or other events where business wear is expected or the norm, and for internal meetings that include visitors that are not members of the Iowa DOT and that require a higher level of formality, as determined by the meeting organizer. Good examples of places where business wear would be required are meetings at the Iowa Capitol, meetings in the Governor’s offices or conference rooms, meetings of the Iowa Transportation Commission, and external meetings where most persons will be wearing business wear or business wear has been declared as the dress standard for the event.
- **Business Casual.** Business casual is required when visiting face-to-face customer service areas of the Iowa DOT, attending internal meetings that include visitors that are not members of the Iowa DOT, and attending external meetings and events. However, when business wear is expected or the norm for an external event, employees attending the event should wear business wear. See “External Events” below. There may also be times when an internal meeting will require a higher level of formality (for instance, when hosting formal dignitaries), and on those occasions business wear may be required. The organizer of the internal meeting should communicate the need for business wear when there is a special need for business wear.

#### **WHAT SHOULD I WEAR TO EXTERNAL EVENTS?**

As discussed above, it’s our expectation that for most external meetings and events, business casual will be the minimum standard. However, there will be times that will not be the case, and either more casual or more formal wear may be required. For all external events you should evaluate the program and circumstances and make a choice that is in keeping with the event. Many events will dictate the dress standard that applies to attendees, and in that case your choices should be in keeping with what the organizer dictates. If the event organizer does not dictate a standard of dress and you are not sure, take your cues from other employees or other persons that have attended the event, and don’t be afraid to ask the organizer or your supervisor if you’re not sure. If you are a speaker or presenter at an event, consider whether it is appropriate to dress at a standard higher than general attendees.

There will be times when the Iowa DOT will exhibit at public events that are very casual, but will still dictate wear that is slightly more formal. In those cases follow the dress requirements dictated to you by the organizer, which may include specific Iowa DOT-logoed wear. (For example, persons working the Iowa DOT exhibition space at the Iowa State Fair might be directed to wear a specific Iowa DOT shirt and khaki pants.)

#### **WHAT ABOUT SHOES? (AND WHAT EXACTLY ARE FLIP FLOPS AND CAN I WEAR THEM?)**

There are so many variations of shoes and shoe types that it would be difficult to categorize and authorize or prohibit the shoes that should be worn, and shoes have the additional quality of aiding our ability to walk and stand and to do so comfortably, which may require special shoes or choices for some people. In general, shoes should adhere to the basic standards that they be clean and in good repair, and be safe for the job we are doing. Shoe choices, like clothing choices, are subject to the personal protective equipment requirements of Iowa DOT Policy No. 230.05, *Personal Protective Equipment*.

Beyond that, your shoes should go with the clothes you’re wearing and the standard you are adhering to. For example, tennis shoes, sandals, and flip flops typically don’t go with business wear but may go

with business casual wear and generally do go with casual wear. There is no general proscription against flip flops or any other type of sandal (whether rubber or leather, “bedazzled” or not “bedazzled,”) other than again they should be clean and in good repair and be safe for the job being performed.

**HOW WILL THE DRESS POLICY BE ENFORCED?**

Because choice of clothing and dress is very broad and personal, choices that stray from the guidelines set forth above will generally be addressed by privately discussing the matter with the employee in question to explain where and how their choices have strayed from the guidelines and asking them to make choices within the guidelines in the future. However, in those hopefully rare instances in which an employee’s clothing or wear is unacceptably dirty, violates standards of decency, is offensive or disparaging, or violates health or safety standards or creates a health or safety risk for the employee or others, the employee may be required to return home to change into acceptable clothing or wear and may be required to take vacation or personal leave without pay to do so.