

**WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY HEALTH
SYSTEM
POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL**

**Policy V.250S
1st Effective 05/17/2018
Revised 12/27/2023
Reviewed 12/27/2023**

DRESS AND APPEARANCE

SCOPE:

All West Virginia University Health System (WVUHS) Entities*

PURPOSE

The Dress and Appearance policy is intended to establish standards of a appropriate dress, appearance and grooming to promote staff, patient and visitor safety; avoid staff, patient and visitor distractions; assist in identifying roles; portray a professional image; and foster trust and confidence in the care provided.

POLICY

WVUHS has established standards for dress, grooming, cleanliness and appearance as they are important in healthcare services. A well-groomed employee with a professional appearance immediately creates a favorable impression of the services provided at WVUHS. Patients, families, accrediting agencies, and local health care authorities rightly expect that strict standards be maintained for safety and infection control. Employee dress and appearance should not be perceived as a distraction to our guests, visitors, fellow employees or patients.

Staff members are accountable for compliance with the standards in this policy and any department, unit or location standards. WVUHS reserves the right to ask employees improperly dressed to go home to change clothing or alter his/her appearance, with loss of pay for the time off duty. Repeated offenses of the Dress and Appearance policy will result in progressive corrective action.

All levels of management, including department managers, supervisors and leads, are responsible for teaching, role modeling, and enforcing the Dress and Appearance policy. Failure to do so will result in progressive corrective action.

More specific or detailed guidelines may be developed by department directors to address job assignment, special circumstances, safety, training and/or patient care issues. Any department guidelines are to be consistent with WVUHS policy. When required by operations, some departmental policies may be stricter than WVUHS policy. To the extent that they differ from WVUHS policy, departmental, unit or location policies are to be approved by the applicable Vice President and Director of Human Resources or designee. Any employee in an off-site location must comply with this policy when performing duties in a WVUHS hospital location.

Exceptions to this policy are allowed on special occasions as defined by each entity and approved by the entity Director of Human Resources or designee in consultation with the entity Chief Executive Officer.

* West Virginia University Health System adopts this policy and procedure for WVU Hospitals, Inc.; Summersville Regional Medical Center; WVUHS Home Care, LLC; WVUHS Medical Group; Reynolds Memorial Hospital; Berkeley Medical Center; Jefferson Medical Center; Potomac Valley Hospital of W.Va., Inc.; United Summit Center; United Hospital Center, Inc.; Wheeling Hospital, Inc.; Barnesville Hospital Association; Harrison Community Hospital, Inc.; United Physician's Care, Inc.; St. Joseph's Hospital of Buckhannon, Inc.; Camden-Clark Memorial Hospital Corporation; Camden-Clark Physician Corporation; Braxton County Memorial Hospital, Inc.; Jackson General Hospital; Wetzel County Hospital; Uniontown Hospital; Allied Health Services, Inc.; West Virginia United Insurance Services, Inc.; Accountable Care Organization of West Virginia, LLC(ACO); AHS, LLC; Gateway Home Health Care, LLC; Peak Health Holdings, LLC; Garrett Regional Medical Center; Princeton Community Hospital Association, Inc.; and Grant Memorial Hospital, Inc.

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A. Definitions:

1. “Non-Patient Care Areas” means administrative or non-clinical areas that do not provide patient care.
2. “Patient Care Areas” means nursing units, outpatient clinics or clinical administrative units where clinical duties are performed.
3. “Staff Members” means WVUHS employees, Volunteers, Visiting Clinicians, Students/Faculty, Vendors and all others that represent WVUHS.

GUIDELINES

A. Identification Badge

An approved identification (ID) badge must be worn in a location that is above the waist at all times while working. The employee name and photo must be visible. Badges must be free of stickers, pins, or other items that may obstruct the picture or name.

An employee may request that only his/her first name or a preferred first name appear on the ID badge by completing a request form available via HROneSource and maintained in his/her personnel file.

Employees are required to pay a replacement fee for lost badges as determined from time to time by each Hospital or organization.

B. General Grooming, Hygiene and Attire

Staff are required to use necessary precautions with regular bathing, use of deodorants, and good dental hygiene to avoid offending patients and co-workers with body odor or bad breath.

Clothing must be reasonably fitted, modest, clean, neat, in good repair, stain and wrinkle-free, and allow for comfortable ease of movement.

C. Hair

Hair should be kept neat, clean, and pulled back as required or directed.

Beards and mustaches must be properly trimmed, well maintained, and clean.

Staff providing patient care must comply with Infection Control policies.

D. Footwear/Hosiery/Socks

Safety, professionalism, quietness, and appearance are the main considerations for footwear. Staff members are to be in compliance with departmental policies when working in that area while on duty. All footwear must be clean and intact.

1. In **patient care areas**, footwear must cover the toes of the foot and must cover the heel or have a back lip or strap to prevent accidental slip-offs, not be of canvas material, have a non-skid sole and be less than two inches (2”) in sole and heel height. Tennis shoes and solid “croc-like” shoes are permitted.

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2. In **non-patient care areas**, professional looking shoes with non-skid soles are to be worn. Shoes should have a covered heel, have a back lip, or strap to prevent accidental slip off. Peep-toed or open-toed shoes and “croc-like” shoes are permitted in administrative or non-clinical areas. Flip-flops or beach style sandals are not permitted.

E. Fragrances and Odors

Light-scented cologne, perfume, lotion or aftershave is permitted. Avoid strong perfume and cigarette odor since some patients and staff members may be sensitive.

F. Gum Chewing

Staff members will refrain from chewing gum when conducting business with customers or providing patient care.

G. Hats

Hats are not permissible unless part of the uniform specified by department policy or when used for religious, professional, or medical reasons.

H. Hoodies and Sweatshirts

Hoodies and zip-up sweatshirts are not permitted. Staff members may wear a hospital-approved fleece from the specified vendor unless not allowed by department dress code.

I. Holiday/Seasonal Attire

Seasonal holiday clothing (tops, socks, and ties) must be consistent with overall appearance standards and approved by the department director.

J. Jewelry, Body Alterations/Piercings, and Tattoos

Reasonable self-expression through personal appearance is permitted, unless it conflicts with an employee's ability to perform his or her job effectively and safely within his or her specific work environment, or it is regarded as offensive, harassing, or inappropriate towards others.

Factors that management will consider when determining whether jewelry, body alterations or tattoos pose a conflict with the employee's job or work environment include:

- Personal safety of self or others, or damage to hospital property (*e.g.*, items such as heavy necklaces, dangling earrings, or any personal embellishments that pose a significant risk of entanglement or other potential safety risks are not allowed.)
- Adherence to departmental or regulatory requirements.
- Productivity or performance expectations.

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- Offensiveness to patients, visitors or others in the workplace (*e.g.*, tattoos with profanity, racist symbols, nudity, or violent imagery.)

If management determines an employee's jewelry, body alterations, gauges, or tattoos present such a conflict, the employee will be encouraged to identify appropriate options, such as removal of excess or offensive jewelry, covering of tattoos, replacement of gauges with flesh-colored covers, transfer to an alternative position, or other reasonable means to resolve the conflict.

K. Nails

Employees providing direct patient care cannot wear artificial nails and should keep their natural nails in good repair, no longer than a quarter inch (1/4") past the end of their fingers. If nail polish is worn, it must be a standard lacquer polish and free of chips and cracks. All other nail applications are considered artificial. Artificial nails are defined as any nail that is attached to the natural nail including press-on nails, acrylic nails, nail tips, nail wraps, gel nails, etc. Nail jewelry is not permitted.

Scrubbed individuals who interact with the sterile field during surgical procedures are **NOT** permitted to wear fingernail polish or gel shellac.

There may be specific units/areas that have a more restrictive nail policy; refer to your department to determine if an addendum applies.

L. Off-Site Events

Dress at off-site events is to be consistent with this policy and the nature of the event. An employee is to consult with his/her supervisor before attending any off-site work-related event to ensure that dress and appearance is appropriate.

M. Attachments, Adornments and Buttons/Pins

Staff members are not permitted to use any electronic or battery devices in any public area that may be seen by patients unless such device is required for them to perform the work assigned to their position. Examples of prohibited devices include ear buds, blue tooth devices, and headsets.

Cloth or cloth-like materials that cannot be disinfected properly between each patient use, patient exposure or that were exposed to the environment of the patient's room are prohibited. Examples may include, but are not limited to: fanny packs, stethoscope covers, personal caddies, carry-alls, and absorbent lanyards.

Service recognition, certification and school pins may be worn, but not attached to the badge.

Face coverings, buttons, pins, or other accessories expressing political candidate, party preference and/or political action messages worn or attached to visible outer garments or clothing, are not permitted to be worn while working. Management reserves the discretion to determine appropriateness of any adornments/accessories.

Appropriate underclothing is required and must be a color undetectable through outer clothing.

N. Staff Without Uniform Requirements

Where uniforms are not required, clothing must be business appropriate. The following are not permitted:

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1. Skirts/dresses shorter than three inches (3”) above the knee
2. Shorts and skorts
3. T-shirts, tank/tube tops, exposed midriffs
4. Capri or crop pants unless they cover the calf of the leg
5. Spandex, yoga pants, athletic wear pants and/or sweatpants, running or jogging suits
6. Denim jeans of any color unless approved by President or designee.
7. Untucked shirts and blouses designed with shirt tails unless designed to be worn on the outside
8. Sweatshirts

O. Staff With Uniform Requirements

Uniforms may be required, including specific colors associated with departments and roles, especially in direct patient care or clinical areas. These colors are approved and coordinated by the Director of Human Resources or designee.

White lab coats are permitted to be worn by clinical staff and must follow brand standards.

Consult entity and applicable department dress codes for detailed information about uniform requirements.

P. Special Days/Sporting Events

Exceptions to this policy when a local event occurs (e.g. football games, entity sponsored charity events) to allow for the wearing of West Virginia University or WVUHS T-shirts or polo shirts may be made at the entity level.

REFERENCES

- World Health Organization Guidelines on Hand Hygiene in Healthcare, 2009
- CDC Hand Hygiene Guideline, 2002
- American Journal of Infection Control 1989, Dec., 17 (6) 340-4
- Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology 2000; 21: 505-509

CROSS REFERENCES – Please refer to your local applicable hospital policies:

- A. Dress Code Addendum
- B. Infection Control
- C. Hospital Scrub Suits

Policy VI.035S - [COVID-19 MASKING POLICY FOR EMPLOYEES](#)

*This system policy supersedes any company specific policy.

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