

Dress for the Job

PICTURE IN YOUR MIND a banker, a police officer, a nurse, and a fast-food worker. How do their appearances differ? Think about what each one wears and how that helps on the job. In this unit, you will learn how appearance plays a part in your career and how you can “dress for the job.”



Objective:



Describe what it means to “dress for the job.”

Key Terms:



apparel
battle dress uniform
carriage
Class A uniform
doff
don

dress code
Dress for Success
facial hair
family-friendly
full-dress uniform
groomed

halitosis
Personal Protective
Equipment (PPE)
phenotype
toque
uniform

Dressing for the Job

“Dressing for the job” involves your total appearance. Of course, it includes your **apparel**, or clothing (e.g., aprons, hats, and uniforms that you wear on the job). There may be some items you are required to wear for safety reasons or so you will be easily identified as an employee. There may also be items you are not allowed to wear, such as shorts or jewelry. But you should consider other aspects of your appearance as well.

Your overall appearance includes your hair, skin, and scent. While your job may not have specific restrictions about these aspects, you should use your best judgment about what is appropriate. Your job may have rules about the length, color, or style of your hair and about **facial hair**, which includes whiskers, beards, mustaches, long sideburns, goatees, and variations of these. Consider whether your skin is clean or covered with excessive make-up or tat-

toos. Do you wear perfumes or after-shave lotions? Make sure they are not overwhelming, especially if you work in close contact with others. Take care of **halitosis**, or breath odor, as well.

Some jobs require you to wear identification cards around your neck or clipped to your clothing. You may also be required to wear **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**, which consists of items that help prevent injuries on the job. PPE includes safety glasses, hearing protection, and hard hats.

Your appearance also includes aspects that are a little harder for you to change. **Carriage** is how one moves and walks. It is the manner of holding and moving your head and body and involves your posture. **Phenotype** is the visible properties of an organism that are produced by the interaction of genotype and the environment, such as weight. Your carriage and phenotype cannot be changed as easily as your clothing, but you can practice standing up straight to improve posture, for example, or make lifestyle changes to lose or gain weight.



FIGURE 1. Some jobs require workers to wear Personal Protective Equipment, such as hard hats, safety glasses, hearing protection, and gloves.

BENEFITS OF DRESSING FOR THE JOB

Dressing appropriately for the job helps you in many ways. Your appearance allows you to project the proper image for your profession or your employer. For example, your employer may want you to appear professional and friendly.

The right clothing helps you complete job tasks effectively. A worker performing physical labor needs clothing that is easy to move in, not a dress suit.

Proper attire also helps ensure the health and safety of the worker and the client or customer and may reduce the chance of accidental injury or harm. Items such as gloves and hair nets promote sanitation and reduce disease-causing organisms. Hard hats and steel-toed boots protect workers from physical injury in more dangerous jobs.

WORKERS ON THE JOB

Food service workers **don**, or put on, clean work clothes, such as a chef jacket or a **toque** (a white hat worn by chefs). The hat is open at the top to allow body heat to escape. Food service workers use hair restraints, such as hats, hair nets, or facial-hair nets, to keep hair from contaminating food. They do not wear jewelry, and they **doff**, or take off, dirty clothes.

Child-care workers generally wear clean, soft clothing that is comfortable to the touch. Men may avoid having facial hair, which scares some young children. These workers avoid jewelry, especially pins and broaches, which might scratch young children being held. A child-care worker's appearance should include a smile, so he or she appears happy.

A fashion model needs to be glamorous and well **groomed**, which is the process of making oneself neat and attractive in appearance. Models maintain the desired weight and body shape, as well as popular make-up and hair styles.

Hotel/motel housekeeping employees don clean uniforms at the beginning of each work shift. They use latex gloves to protect themselves against infections and harsh chemicals, such as cleaning solutions. They also don chemical-resistant aprons or smocks.

The “**uniform**” is a colloquial term for the clothing typically worn by a salesperson. An individual in sales generally has a neat appearance, with a stylish haircut and light fragrance. A man has closely trimmed whiskers, if any. He generally wears a long-sleeved dress shirt buttoned at the wrist, a properly knotted necktie, a white undershirt, long slacks, black socks, dress shoes, and sparse jewelry, such as a finger ring and wrist watch. A woman wears natural-looking make-up, a pants suit, dress shoes with hose, and sparse jewelry, including a finger ring, wrist watch, bracelet, and necklace.

Military uniforms are either functional or formal. A **full-dress uniform** is for a formal occasion, such as a parade or wedding. A **Class A uniform** is for work or daily use in a non-combat situation, such as work in an office. A **battle dress uniform** is for work or daily use. It is often specialized. For example, it may be camouflaged for the surroundings, such as the jungle or desert, and it offers Level A chemical protection. The military also has specialized uniforms, such as flight suits, for some people.

Customers expect theme parks to provide experiences that are **family-friendly**, causing families to feel free and happy. Next to the military, theme parks may have the most stringent **dress code**, which is designated apparel or apparel deemed acceptable and appropriate in a given position. You can do an online search for specific theme parks and find a list of dress code requirements.



FIGURE 2. The common “uniform” for a male salesperson is a long-sleeved dress shirt, a necktie, and long slacks.

Dress Code Details

You will probably learn how to dress for your job at your interview or when you first report to work. You may learn more through instructions or your own observations of other employ-



DIGGING DEEPER...

UNCOVERING ADDITIONAL FACTS: Business Casual

While many employers have very specific dress codes, such as a uniform shirt and black pants or a suit and tie, many companies have a “business casual” dress code. That is much less specific, and it may be difficult to determine exactly what is or isn’t appropriate. Visit http://humanresources.about.com/od/workrelationships/a/dress_code.htm to read a description of a business casual dress code. Then find five examples of business casual outfits in magazines or catalogs, or print them from online sources. Cut out your examples, and glue them on a piece of paper to create a poster display of business casual outfits.

ees during on-the-job training. If you have a professional job, visit the Web site **Dress for Success** at <http://www.dressforsuccess.com>. It describes current fashion for men and women in business, professional, administrative, and leadership positions.

If your position requires a uniform or specific PPE to do your job properly, it may be provided by your employer. In other situations, however, you are responsible for purchasing and maintaining your own work wardrobe.

Summary:



“Dressing for the job” involves not only your clothing but also your overall appearance, including hair, facial hair, jewelry, and fragrance. Different jobs have different standards. Some jobs require Personal Protective Equipment, such as hard hats and hearing protection, to keep workers safe. Dressing appropriately helps you present a professional image and do your job properly. Your employer will probably explain the company’s dress code during your interview or when you begin your job. Sometimes employers provide uniforms or safety equipment, but it may be up to you to purchase and maintain your own.

Checking Your Knowledge:



1. What is apparel?
2. What does carriage mean?
3. What are some examples of Personal Protective Equipment?
4. Which jobs tend to have the most stringent dress codes?
5. What is a toque, and in what job would it be required?

Expanding Your Knowledge:



Learn more about the dress codes in various jobs. Interview five people to ask how they dress for their jobs. Find out whether they have specific uniforms or simply general dress codes. Who pays for the clothing? A fast-food employee, for example, may be given a shirt and hat but may supply his or her own pants and shoes. A news anchor may be able to choose his or her clothes and pay with a clothing allowance from the station. Share your findings with your classmates to learn more about different standards.

Web Links:



Decoding the Dress Code

http://www.salary.com/personal/layoutscripts/psnl_articles.asp?tab=psn&cat=cat011&ser=ser033&part=par230

People Who Wear Uniforms

<http://ezinearticles.com/?People-Who-Wear-Uniforms&id=1273722>

Sample Dress Code

http://www.elinfonet.com/blog/index/wiki/Sample_Dress_Code_Policy/