



# Dress and Grooming for Job Success

Many of us object to being judged for employment based on how we look. We prefer to be hired because of our skills and abilities, not because of our dress and grooming. But like it or not, appearance is important.

Employers hire people they believe will "fit" into their organization. Skills, experience and qualifications are important, but so are dress and grooming. Your appearance expresses motivation and professionalism. Dress as though you want the job, as though you already have a job. A visit to the company may help you decide the appropriate clothing to select for your interview. A good standard is to dress a step above how the best-dressed person dresses for a similar job. When in doubt, err on the conservative side.

Your appearance is a statement of who you are. Your clothing and grooming should create the image that will help you get the job offer.

## *First Impressions*

Most of us have heard the expression, "A picture is worth a thousand words." Remember this when preparing to meet with a prospective employer. The picture you create will greatly influence your chances of being hired. Most employers form a first impression during the first seven seconds of a meeting. Not much is said in this short time; early judgment is based strictly on appearance. Furthermore, studies reveal that employers consistently ask the question, "Does the individual look right for the job?"

## *Clothing*

There are no absolute rules regarding dress. Your selection will vary based on your occupation, location and preference. A business suit for a construction job or overalls for an office job would not be appropriate dress. The goal is to look the part, to have your appearance be consistent with your occupation. Neat, clean work clothes would be suitable for assembly, production or warehouse positions. Sales and office positions require business clothes. A conservative suit would be the recommended style for professional and managerial positions. The clothes you wear affect all your attitude and confidence levels. When people take the time to dress for success,

they tend to feel good about themselves. Image alone will not win the job offer, but it will go a long way in building respect.

Common sense and good taste are the best guides in selecting clothing for the interview. Avoid faddish styles and loud colors. Jewelry should be conservative and kept to a minimum. Clothing should fit comfortably. A basic rule is to dress one step above what you would wear on the job. You want the employer to focus on your skills, not your clothes.

## *Grooming*

Personal grooming is just as important as what you wear. You may select the right clothes, but neglecting personal hygiene can ruin the image you wish to present. Review the following grooming checklist before meeting with an employer.



*Dress and Grooming for Job Success*



ITEM	GROOMING
Hair	Clean, trimmed and neatly combed or arranged
Facial Hair (men only)	Freshly shaved; mustache or beard neatly trimmed.
Fingernails	Neat, clean and trimmed.
Teeth	Brushed and fresh breath.
Breath	Beware of foods that may leave breath odor. Beware of tobacco, alcohol and coffee odor. Use a breath mint if needed.
Body	Freshly bathed/showered. Use deodorant.
Make-up (women only)	Use sparingly and be natural looking.
Perfumes/Colognes/ After-Shave	Use sparingly or none at all. Your scent should not linger after you leave.

### *Goals of Appropriate Dress and Grooming*

The primary goal is to feel good about the way you look and project a positive image. When you feel good about yourself, you naturally convey confidence and a positive attitude. These nonverbal messages are as important in the interview as the verbal skills you use in selling your qualifications. Persistence and follow-up are the keys to a successful job search. If you are serious about employment, plan your follow-up. There is no such thing as a wasted effort, and the only dead lead is the one you chose to kill. Situations change and the employer who is not hiring today may be looking for someone with your qualifications in the future.



For additional job search assistance, contact your local Minnesota WorkForce Center.

[www.deed.state.mn.us](http://www.deed.state.mn.us)

1.888.GET JOBS (1.888.438.5627)

1.800.657.3973 (TTY)

A service of the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development.

