

SC CIRCULAR NO. 27-2000, April 12, 2000

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TO:

ALL PERSONNEL OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURTS, METROPOLITAN TRIAL COURTS, MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURTS IN CITIES, MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURTS, MUNICIPAL CIRCUIT TRIAL COURTS, SHARI'A DISTRICT COURTS AND SHARI'A CIRCUIT COURTS

SUBJECT:

GUIDELINES IN THE WEARING OF THE PRESCRIBED OFFICE UNIFORMS

The prescription of a dress code for all government officials and employees conforms with the provisions of Republic Act No. 6713 (Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees). Its intent goes beyond maintaining modesty and proper decorum in the civil service. The wearing of the appropriate office attire leaves as well an impression on the public on whether or not government officials and employees perform and discharge their duties with the highest degree of, inter alia, excellence, professionalism and skill.

Being at the line with direct citizens' exposure in the administration and dispensation of justice and being housed in temples of justice, lower court officials and employees must always set the example not just of modesty and proper decorum in their day-to-day transactions with the public but also of utmost professionalism. For this reason and pursuant to Administrative Circulars Nos. 10-99 and 10-A-99, series of 1999, requiring all employees of the Judiciary to wear the prescribed office uniforms on designated days of the week, the following guidelines are set for strict compliance by all lower court officials and employees:

1. Grant of Clothing Allowance. All employees who have been in the service for at least six (6) consecutive months shall be entitled to the clothing allowance; provided that said employees shall still serve for another six (6) months from the day the said allowance is received (Sec. 305, Article 5 [Clothing Allowance], Chapter 5, Title 5, Book III, General Accounting and Auditing Manual [Volume I], s. 1992).
2. Schedule. The wearing of the new office uniforms started on 03 January 2000 with the following schedule:

Mondays and Wednesdays - Navy Blue set
Tuesdays and Thursdays - Khaki Set
Fridays - Appropriate office attire.

Appropriate office attire as herein mentioned refers to the requirements prescribed by Civil Service Memorandum Circular Nos. 14 (Dress Code) and 25, s. 1991, the pertinent provisions of which read, as follows:

CSC MC No. 14, s. 1991:

"2. ... they must be dressed appropriately; preferably business clothes but no party attire, picnic clothes, sandos nor t-shirts should be worn at work.

3. The use of tight fitting, seductive micro-mini and gauzy/transparent dresses by female employees shall be prohibited.

4. Walking shorts, pedal pushers, leggings, tights, jogging and maong pants shall likewise be prohibited...

5. The use of too much costume jewelry, flashy bangles and similar accessories shall likewise be prohibited. Conversely, ostentatious display of expensive jewelry is strongly discouraged and prohibited except for special occasions and official celebrations.

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7. The wearing of slippers, sandals, bakya, etc. in office premises is banned. Only appropriate footwear shall be allowed."

CSC MC No. 25, s. 1991:

"1.a) The wearing of "maong" pants among male employees is allowed provided that the same is worn with collared T-shirts.

1.b) ...In other words, female office workers are not allowed to wear "maong."

3. Wearing of Collared T-Shirts. T-shirts, the wearing of which is prohibited in the Circular, refer to non-collared ones. Collared T-shirts are allowed for wear by both male and female employees.

4. Skirt Length. Female officials and employees shall see to it that their skirts are knee-length. Definitely, mini and micro-mini skirts are restricted.

5. Appropriate Footwear. Appropriate footwear (CSC MC No. 14, s. 1991) shall mean closed formal shoes. The wearing of slippers, step-ins, sandals, and bakya are-certainly prohibited, especially when walking within office premises, courthouses or Halls of Justice.

6. Non-wearing of Office Uniforms. Except for very special and meritorious reasons, all officials and employees who have been issued uniforms shall wear them in accordance with the Schedule provided in Section 2 hereof. In single-sala courts, officials and employees who are in mourning or pregnant shall seek exemption from the Presiding Judge of their respective courts from wearing the said uniforms. The written exemption shall indicate the period during which they are so exempted.

In multiple-sala courts, the Executive Judge shall constitute a Uniform Committee of three (3) members, with the Clerk of Court as Chairperson, which shall act on all requests for exemption from the wearing of the prescribed uniforms. Reports on the personnel granted exemption shall be submitted to the Uniform Committee.

7. Wearing of Identification Cards. The wearing of the office I.D. at all times forms part of the official uniform of the court.

8. Judges. Being the official representatives of the entire Judiciary and the most visible symbol of Lady Justice as well as being the overall managers in their respective areas of jurisdiction, Judges are not required to wear the office uniform. However, they may do so should they wish to.

9. Officials or Employees Who Have Retired, Resigned or Who Have Severe Relationship with the Judiciary.

A. Officials and/or employees granted the uniform allowance and issued the corresponding uniforms but were separated from the service either due to retirement, resignation or termination from the service before the completion of the required number of months (as provided in Section 1) shall be required to refund such amount that the Financial Management Office, Office of the Court Administrator, may determine to be in excess of the allowable amount due them for the year.

B. Compulsory retirees for a particular year shall not be issued uniforms anymore within the said year.

10. Transferees within the Judiciary. Officials or employees granted the uniform allowance in kind but who have transferred to other offices within the Judiciary, i.e. from the lower courts to the Supreme Court or vice versa, shall no longer be issued another set of uniforms. They shall wear the uniforms already issued to them in the office to which they have transferred. No refund of the amount received in this case shall be necessary. However, they can wear the uniforms of their new office but payment for such uniforms shall be at their own expense.

11. Transferees to Other Government Offices. Officials or employees granted the uniform allowance in kind and whose measurements have already been taken by the uniform dressmakers/tailors but who have transferred to other government agencies or who have resigned (1) before the end of the calendar year; and (2) prior to the delivery of the uniforms shall receive the said uniforms made/tailored for them. In addition, they shall be required to refund such amount that the Financial Management Office, Office of the Court Administrator, may determine to be in excess of the allowable amount due them for the year.

12. New Employees. Once a new employee becomes entitled to the uniform allowance for a particular year and the same is given in kind, the Court shall pay the corresponding amount thereof. However, the said employee shall be entitled to only one set for each of the uniforms issued for the said year.

13. Non-inclusion of personnel entitled to uniform. Those who are entitled to the uniform allowance but were not included in the master list of employees should coordinate with the Office of Administrative Services, Office of the Court Administrator.

14. Administrative Disciplinary Action for Non-compliance with the Guidelines. Subsection (b), Section 46 of Chapter 7 (Discipline), Subtitle A (Civil Service Commission), Title I, Book V of the Administrative Code of 1987 includes the violation of reasonable office regulations as a ground for disciplinary action. Section 23, Rule IV (Discipline) of the "Omnibus Rules Implementing Book V of Executive Order No. 292 (Administrative Code of 1987) and Other Pertinent Civil Service Laws" provides, to wit:

"The following are light offenses with their corresponding penalties: xxx

(c) Violation of reasonable office rules and regulations (This includes violation of MC 14, s. 1991 [Dress Code])."

Thus, subject to the requirements of due process, the following penalties shall be strictly imposed in administrative disciplinary proceedings for non-compliance with the Guidelines:

- A. 1st Offense - Reprimand
- B. 2nd Offense - Suspension for one (1) day to thirty (30) days
- C. 3rd Offense - Suspension for two (2) months
- D. 4th Offense - Dismissal from the service

15. Monitoring of Compliance with the Guidelines. All Presiding Judges, Clerks of Court and Branch Clerks of Courts are hereby directed to implement the provisions of these Guidelines and to closely monitor compliance therewith. The Clerk of Court or the Branch Clerk of Court, as the case may be, shall submit a monthly report of any violation to the Uniform Committee, Supreme Court, for appropriate action.

(Sgd.)ALFREDO L. BENIPAYO

Court Administrator

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