

No More Friday 'Grubbies' for MTA Administrative Staff

What to Wear

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Aug. 13, 2002) To Deputy CEO John Catoe, casual Fridays at MTA mean "business casual" dress for administrative staff, not "grubbies."

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In July, Catoe issued a memo entitled "Casual Friday Attire" that reminded employees about the agency's dress code as outlined in [HR Policy 4-4](#).

It is the responsibility of supervisors, he wrote, to ensure that employees adhere to the policy. Should an employee come to work dressed inappropriately, the immediate supervisor must "direct an employee to immediately modify his/her attire..." even if the employee has to be sent home to change.

"This isn't just John's pet peeve," says Catoe. "It's about professionalism. As management, we have the right to expect employees to dress in a certain way. It's something that's required to work at the MTA."

In an interview with *Metro.net*, Catoe discussed the thought behind the memo and the need for employees to dress professionally every day of the week.

***Metro.net:* Why did you issue the memo?**

John Catoe: Let me start by explaining Roger Snoble's vision. He wants the MTA to be seen as the Number One transportation agency in the country. Number One from the aspect of customer service, professionalism, knowledge, quality of service and creativity as we work to improve mobility in the county.

That includes the image of the agency and people's perception of the organization. When we dress a certain way, it gives the perception that we're professionals and that we're business-oriented. This is a professional organization, a place of business where we're in contact with the public and provide service to them. We should dress in a way that demonstrates our respect for them and for ourselves.

We've taken casual Friday way beyond what it should be.

***M-N:* What are examples of acceptable and unacceptable dress?**

J.C.: Unacceptable includes flip-flops, T-shirts, shorts, untucked polo shirts and baggy jeans. That's not business casual dress.

Business casual for men is slacks, nice shirt and a sweater or jacket. It includes khaki or colored slacks like Dockers, a pressed shirt or a polo shirt with a collar. For women, a skirt or nice slacks and a blouse in warm weather, a sweater or jacket when it's cooler. Dressy casual.

***M-N:* Does this apply to administrative staff at sector offices and at operating divisions?**

J.C.: Yes. I expect the same level of professional appearance.

***M-N:* What do you expect of managers and executives?**

J.C.: The standard for them on Fridays is truly business casual dress. No

jeans, no sneakers. The most casual dress for men might be khaki pants and shirt or a polo shirt with collar, hard-sole shoes with socks. A tie isn't necessary.

For women executives and managers, the most casual might be a pantsuit or slacks and blouse with jacket or sweater.

M-N: We've talked about Fridays, what's appropriate dress Monday through Thursday?

J.C.: That's an issue, too. Whether they are executives or administrative staff, men should wear ties and women should wear business dress. They're all professionals.

M-N: Some employees, male and female, go out into the field and may spend at least part of the day at a construction site or other worksite that's not in an office setting.


J.C.: If you're working on a project and you're going out to inspect a construction site, for example, you dress accordingly for the day. But, my observation has been that some of these employees dress like that every day, whether they're going out to a project or not. And, I know that they don't go out to the project every day.

M-N: What's the next step?


J.C.: I believe MTA employees take great pride in their professionalism and service to the traveling public and I expect to see an immediate overall improvement in appearance not only on Fridays, but also during the week. I'm going to hold executive management accountable for maintaining a professional appearance among their staff members.

What to Wear : Illustrations and checklist

Women



Men



What women should wear:

- Slacks, skirts, with coordinating tops.
- A jacket, sweater or over-blouse to "finish" the outfit.

What men should wear:

- Khakis, chinos, or gabardine trousers.
- Shirts with collars (polo-style or button down).

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flat shoes with coordinating trouser socks or hose.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sweaters with collared shirts underneath.• Loafers with colored socks.
What women should NOT wear: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leggings or spandex pants.• Casual, athletic or short shorts.• Very short skirts, bare shoulders, tight sweater tops, or any kind of glitter.• Sport team jackets, shirts or any other "logo" clothing (except your own company's logo).• Athletic t-shirts, sweat shirts or sweat pants.• Athletic shoes, thong (flip-flop) sandals.• Hats or caps.	What men should NOT wear: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• T-shirts.• Sport team jackets, shirts or any other "logo" clothing (except your own company's logo).• Sweat shirts and sweat pants, athletic "tube" socks. Running clothes.• Hiking boots, athletic shoes, or sandals.• Hats or caps of any kind.• Shorts

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