

# PLEN

The Public Leadership Education Network | Preparing Women to Lead

## Tips for Dressing Professionally

**Professional/Business Dress:** This is the most conservative type of business wear. It is what you should wear for a job interview, and what you will be expected to wear in the office if you work in accounting, finance, or other more conservative industries. This type of dress is also expected if you interact with elected officials or staff. For women, this means a business suit (skirt or pants), dress and jacket with nice shoes (low heels).

**Business Casual:** This will likely be the office dress code in a semi-conservative workplace. Business casual is a blouse with a collar and/or a sweater, khakis or dress slacks (with a crease) and nice shoes (flats or low heels) for women. Women can also wear a moderate length dress or skirt (knee-length or longer). Sneakers, shorts and Capri pants are **not** considered appropriate for business casual wear.

### **Dress to avoid while working in a professional environment:**

Jeans, shorts, tee shirts, flip flops, sneakers, lace, high heels that are too high, miniskirts, strapless/spaghetti strap tops, deep cut tops or dresses that show a lot of cleavage.

### **Other Hints:**

- Many people will bring a different pair of shoes to change into when they arrive at the office so they can wear comfortable shoes during their commutes.
- Make sure bra straps/panty lines are not visible.
- If your office has a Casual Friday policy, you may usually wear jeans (ask first!), but make sure that your top is still appropriate.
- Look at what your supervisor is wearing and model your dress after him or her.
- Sleeveless dresses may be worn with a cardigan or a blazer.
- You don't want to wear anything too tight.
- When in doubt about what the dress code is, ask your boss.
- Excessive jewelry is unnecessary. Your outfit is not meant to be a distraction; the same goes for makeup.
- Make sure that your underwear will not be revealed if you bend down or over.
- Make sure that your clothes are ironed. Wrinkled clothes are not professional.
- Your hair should look presentable.
- Be wary of scented perfume. You might have a coworker who is allergic or sensitive to certain smells.
- Shoes should always be in good condition, free of dirt and polished regularly.