

Handler Dress Code Guidelines

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to define a basic dress code to ensure all handlers and therapy dogs of WMTD present a safe, professional, and well-groomed appearance. This policy applies to all members and is intended to be the minimum standard when no other dress code or policy is in place for a specific program and/or facility.

Many programs have a written dress code or will verbally direct the handler as to the approved or acceptable attire for the facility. The policy/practice of the program does supersede these guidelines.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- All clothing must be appropriate to the type of volunteer work being performed; the type of business conducted at the facility; and, takes into account the expectations of the individuals being served. Extremes in your appearance (dress, hair, jewelry, etc.) should be avoided.
- Clothing is not to attract undue attention or serve as a distraction. There is to be no clothing that displays commercial, political or religious wording. There is to be no obscene or vulgar language, pictures or graphics displayed. Clothing should be without any large lettering, logos or slogans, unless a part of an issued uniform or clothing of a program/facility.
- Clothing is not to reveal cleavage. The exposure of any portion of the back, chest, stomach or underclothing is not appropriate. Articles of clothing should not be provocative in nature.
- All clothing is to be clean, in good repair and fit properly. It should be made from material that is easily laundered.
- Clothing may be adjusted for our changing seasons and climate and for any special projects.

HYGIENE

Excellent personal hygiene and personal habits are very important. Members are expected to be neat, clean and well-groomed. Hair should be clean, combed and neatly trimmed or arranged. It is not recommended that perfume/cologne be worn or other heavily scented body lotions or fragrances.

GENERAL

The following is a general overview of appropriate attire when volunteering. No dress code can cover all situations so members will need to use their best judgment in their choice of clothing. Members are directed to contact the Primary Contact of the program; the facility contact person, or the WMTD Director of Programs if they have any questions or concerns regarding their appearance.

CLOTHING & ACCESSORY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following examples of attire and accessories are offered as examples of acceptable and, potentially inappropriate articles of clothing/accessories for volunteer work.

Pants

It is recommended to wear full-length slacks. Please avoid jeans, stretch pants, sweat pants, athletic wear, short-cut shorts, bib overalls, leggings, spandex or other form-fitting pants.

Dresses/Skirts

If an individual prefers to wear a dress or skirt, it is recommended to wear casual dresses, skirts or split skirts. Please avoid mini-skirts, skorts, sun dresses, spaghetti strap dresses, or spandex.

Shirts

It is recommended to wear long or short sleeved polo shirts, turtlenecks, sweaters, dress shirts/blouses. Please avoid wearing tank tops, form/tight fitting tops, low cut collars, halter- tops and anything that leaves the shoulders bare or exposes any portion of the back, chest and stomach.

Footwear

It is recommended that footwear be closed-toe shoes, including loafers, boots, flats, or athletic shoes. It is not recommended to wear flip-flops, thongs, sandals, or slippers. All footwear is to be clean and in good repair.

Jewelry

Jewelry should be conservative and should not be worn when it interferes with a member's ability to perform their volunteer work. Some jewelry has the potential to create a safety hazard to the member and to the individual they are serving. Please avoid hoop/dangle earrings, bracelets, and necklaces.

Costumes

Clothing or make-up that significantly alters your appearance should not be worn without the consent of the facility. Costumes can be a safety hazard; may cause fear and confusion in some patient populations and with other animals; and may be offensive or generally unsuitable for therapy visits. Themed clothing is the safest route for all and will still reflect the holiday spirit.

Name Badges

It is recommended to wear your WMTD badge unless one is provided to you by the program. Badges are to be kept clean and in good repair. Lost or damaged name badges

are to be reported to the appropriate agency for replacement. Name badges are to be surrendered upon termination of membership or ending your volunteer status with a facility.

Uniforms

Any member who is assigned a uniform must wear them while volunteering, in accordance with the dress code and volunteer policy of the facility. If the facility's uniform is restrictive to therapy visit movements (e.g. smocks that restrict full arm movement), please notify the Primary Contact or the Director of Programs to assist in contacting the facility to suggest an update to the uniform policy or approved substitute. Uniforms must be clean, neatly pressed and in good repair.

WMTD Apparel

Apparel with the embroidered WMTD logo is only available for purchase by WMTD members from vendors posted on the WMTD website. Members are encouraged to wear clothing that identifies them as a volunteer of WMTD if uniforms are not otherwise provided. Articles that have the WMTD logo should always be destroyed, gifted or resold to WMTD members to avoid any impersonation by an individual who is not a current member of WMTD.

PROGRAM DRESS CODES

Members are expected to follow the established dress code of any program registered with WMTD, whether the guidelines are stricter or more relaxed than the above minimum standards established by WMTD. Members are still cautioned to use their best judgment when a program dress code does not address the health or safety of the handler or their dog.