

Summer Office Attire: How to Put a Halt to Halter Tops

Written by Peter Post



I have been in business for over 25 years and have wonderful employees.

However, the newer and younger ones seem to come with their own set of rules. For example, our office has a dress code, and jeans and halter tops aren't allowed. Still, some of my employees will show up in tight jeans and bare midriffs. If I ask them not to wear these outfits in the office, I'm worried they'll say it's harassment.

As detective Joe Friday would say, stick to the facts, just the facts. First, your dress code: to avoid misunderstandings, stick to general statements followed by specific examples. Instead of saying "no halter tops," consider "no bare midriffs," then give examples of overly revealing clothing (halter tops, etc.), making it clear this list is not all-inclusive. Second, add a sentence stating that the employer, in its sole discretion, has the right to determine the suitability of a person's outfit to the work he or she performs.

Third, when you meet with any employee to discuss attire, have a trusted employee of the same sex present to take notes. Give the employee a copy of your dress code. If she didn't sign it when first hired, ask her to sign now, indicating she has read it and understands it. Then explain to her that it's your company and your culture, and she needs to abide by your policies or look elsewhere for work.

No comments about how great she looks or anything else--just the facts.

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