

Questions & Answers

Professional Image – First Impressions Count Guidelines for VCH Employees and Leaders

What's happening?

Professional Image—First Impressions Count is a set of guidelines to help employees and managers understand and communicate the expectations for a professional image at work. The guidelines were developed using feedback from patients, staff and physicians throughout VCH and are designed to ensure that our image is consistent with the level of trust we ask of our patients, our high level of expertise and the quality of care we provide.

Why do we need these guidelines?

First impressions count and a professional image demonstrates our commitment to providing quality, patient-centred care. These guidelines will help us to be easily identified by patients and to maintain infection control and Work Safe BC standards.

What's covered?

- The guidelines for **clothing, accessories, nails, hair and footwear** apply to all employees but the application of the guidelines will vary depending on location and role of the employee.
- **Larger more legible name tags** for employees who have in-person contact with patients and families will be provided without charge and are to be worn in addition to (not in place of) photo ID cards.
- **Optional VCH-branded work clothing** will be available for purchase by employees at vchworkclothing.ca beginning in February 2017.
- The clothing is colour-specific according to role and will be of greatest interest to staff members who already purchase work wear.

When is this happening?

- The guidelines became effective **June 1, 2016**.
- Name tag distribution began in **June 2016**. Ordering information for managers on VCH Connect, under EE.
- vchworkclothing.ca for purchase of VCH-branded work clothing available **February 2017**.

Does this mean we all have to dress the same?

Not at all. For example those who currently wear hospital-provided scrubs would continue to do so. Those working in certain community settings would continue to wear clothing appropriate for their client population, within the guidelines. The guidelines are designed to be flexible so that all staff and physicians can maintain a professional image that's appropriate to their role.

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Will our manager order VCH work clothing for us?

No. Managers are not involved in the purchase of VCH work clothing. Purchase is optional and employees can place orders on vchworkclothing.ca themselves. Group ordering recommended to reduce shipping cost.

What if I work in an office area, do the guidelines still apply?

Yes. For those in an office or corporate environment, guidelines for clothing, accessories, and personal hygiene may be most relevant, whereas a magnetic name tag or VCH work clothing may not apply.

What about staff who wear daily scrubs?

Employees who work in areas requiring daily scrubs will continue to wear scrubs. **For infection control reasons, scrubs are never to be worn off site.**

Will everyone need to wear a name tag?

No. Only staff and physicians who have in-person contact with patients, clients or families will be provided name tags. For most staff the tag will include first name and role (e.g. Barbara, Registered Nurse). Physicians and leaders may request tags including last name for improved identification by clients and families.

Do the name tags replace photo ID badges?

No. Name tags help patients, staff and visitors to know who is caring for them. Photo ID badges are for security purposes. Name tags are not a substitute for introducing yourself and explaining your role.

What happens if I don't follow the guidelines?

Current processes for non-performance would apply. Managers are responsible for follow up with individuals in order to achieve compliance. Managers may ask staff to change their clothing or accessories.

Where can I get the guidelines?

On [VCH Connect](#) under Employee Engagement.

Questions or concerns?

Discuss the guidelines with your manager or leader. Send questions about nametags to: professionalimage@vch.ca.

