



Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
Office of the Court Administrator
Manila

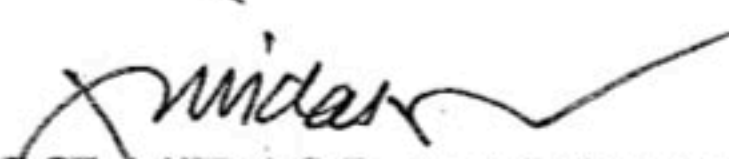
OCA CIRCULAR NO. 57-2021

TO : ALL FIRST AND SECOND LEVEL COURTS

SUBJECT: APPROVED MEMORANDUM DATED 19 APRIL 2021 OF THE COMMITTEE FOR OFFICE UNIFORMS FOR THE SUPREME COURT, THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL AND LOWER COURTS ON THE REQUEST OF THE SUPREME COURT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION (SCEA) FOR THE EXTENSION OF THE RELAXATION OF THE RULES ON THE WEARING OF THE PRESCRIBED OFFICE UNIFORM EFFECTIVE 03 MAY 2021

For the information and guidance of all first and second level courts, appended herein as Annex "A" is the approved Memorandum dated 19 April 2021 of the Committee for Office Uniforms for the Supreme Court, the Presidential Electoral Tribunal and Lower Courts on the request of the SCEA for the extension of the relaxation of the Guidelines on the Wearing of Appropriate Office Attire, thereby allowing court employees to wear wash day clothes effective 03 May 2021 until the implementation of the Modified General Community Quarantine (MGCQ), provided that all court employees shall wear decent and presentable attire while on official duty, pursuant to Paragraph IV(B)[B.3] of Administrative Circular No. 42-2013, in relation to Paragraph II of the Guidelines on the Wearing of Appropriate Office Attire.*

06 May 2021


JOSE MIDAS P. MARQUEZ
Court Administrator

AMA/ACJ/FPC/rgt/scea.relaxationofguidelinesonwearingofuniform

* II. Collarless t-shirts for men shall not be allowed even on Fridays. However, denim or "maong" pants, rubber shoes, sandals, and step-ins may still be worn on Fridays only.



Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
Manila

Committee for Office Uniform for the Supreme Court,
the Presidential Electoral Tribunal and the Lower Courts

MEMORANDUM

FOR : HON. ALEXANDER G. GESMUNDO
Chief Justice of the Philippines

THRU : ATTY. MARIFE M. LOMIBAO-CUEVAS
Clerk of Court *En Banc*

RE : REQUEST TO EXTEND THE RELAXATION OF THE RULES
ON THE WEARING OF THE PRESCRIBED OFFICE ATTIRE
EFFECTIVE 03 MAY 2021 UNTIL THE IMPOSITION OF THE
MODIFIED GENERAL COMMUNITY QUARANTINE
(MGCQ)

DATE : 19 APRIL 2021

In a Letter dated 22 March 2021, the Supreme Court Employees Association (SCEA), through Mr. Erwin D. Ocson, SCEA President, requests that "the Court further extend the relaxation of the rules on the wearing of the prescribed office attire in view of the stricter general community quarantine (GCQ) status in Metro Manila and nearby provinces, and the surging cases of the different variant of the Corona virus (Covid-19) in the country."¹

In an online meeting held on 15 April 2021, this Committee discussed the matter and resolved to submit this memorandum with its recommendations for Your Honor's consideration and approval. A narration on the antecedents relative to existing policies on office uniforms and the SCEA's previous requests for relaxation of the rules on office uniform is likewise discussed for Your Honor's information.

¹ A copy of the 22 March 2021 SCEA Letter is attached as Annex A.

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Factual Antecedents

a. Court Issuances on Prescribed Office Uniform and Appropriate Office Attire

On 29 April 2013, the Supreme Court issued Administrative Order No. 42-2013² prescribing the Guidelines on the (A) Grant of Uniform/Clothing Allowance (U/CA) and (B) Wearing of Office Uniform/Appropriate Office Attire.³

Subsequently, the wearing of office uniforms became optional pursuant to the Memorandum dated 26 June 2018 of this Committee, recommending the optional wearing of the prescribed office uniforms from 19 June 2018 until the next implementation of the wearing of prescribed office uniforms. The recommendation was made by this Committee considering that the term for wearing of office uniforms for FY 2016 would end on 30 June 2018, and acting upon the request of the Supreme Court Employees' Association (SCEA) to extend the period of non-wearing of office uniforms. This Committee favorably recommended the optional wearing of office uniforms subject to the strict observance of the guidelines on the wearing of office uniform and appropriate office attire in Administrative Circular No. 42-2013. This recommendation was approved by then Acting Chief Justice Antonio T. Carpio on 02 July 2018.⁴

In view of the optional wearing of office uniforms, then Chief Justice Lucas P. Bersamin issued the Guidelines on the Wearing of Appropriate Office Attire dated 06 December 2018.⁵ Under these guidelines, all male lawyers were enjoined to wear *barong*, whether long or short sleeved, and female lawyers were required to wear blazers while on official duty. Further, denim or *maong* pants, rubber shoes, sandals, and step-ins were allowed to be worn on Fridays⁶ (also known as wash days), while collarless t-shirts for men were prohibited on any day, even on wash days.

Thereafter, on 03 February 2020, then Chief Justice Diosdado M. Peralta issued Memorandum Order No. 12-2020⁷ directing strict compliance with OCA Circular No. 250-2015⁸ and reiterating the mandatory observance of proper office attire, with particular attention to the following attire which are prohibited when performing official functions:

C. Proper Office Attire and Appearance of Judges and Court Personnel

x x x

4. The following are prohibited office attire when performing official functions:
 - a. Gauzy, transparent or net-like blouses or shirts;
 - b. Sando, sleeveless, strapless or spaghetti-strapped blouses, tank tops (unless worn as undershirts), blouses with over-plunging necklines;
 - c. Collarless t-shirts for men;

² Signed by then Chief Justice Maria Lourdes P.A. Sereno.

³ Annex B.

⁴ Annex C.

⁵ Annex D.

⁶ Also known as Wash Days.

⁷ Annex E.

⁸ OCA Circular No. 250-2015 dated 10 November 2015.

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- d. Micro-mini skirts, walking shorts, cycling shorts, leggings, tights, jogging pants, and pedal pushers;
- e. Sandals and step-ins exposing the toes; and
- f. Rubber sandals, slippers, and "bakya."

***b. Supreme Court Employees' Association (SCEA)
Requests for the Relaxation of the Guidelines
on the Wearing of Prescribed Office Attire from
December 2020 to March 2021***

In a letter dated 10 December 2020, the SCEA requested for the relaxation of the guidelines on the wearing of prescribed office attire from 17 December 2020 until the last working day of the year, in time for the holding of Yuletide celebrations in the Supreme Court and the various offices of the Court.

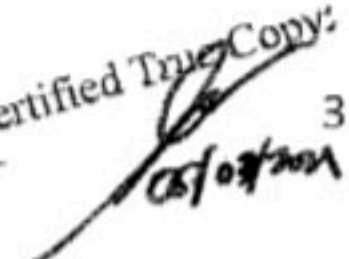
Finding merit in their request and considering that the number of court employees walk, ride a bicycle or drive a motorcycle to and from work due to the limited public transportation brought about by existing community quarantine protocols, this Committee submitted a Memorandum dated 16 December 2020 recommending the relaxation of the said guidelines from 17 December 2020 until 31 January 2021, thereby allowing court employees to wear wash day clothes during the said period. This recommendation was approved by Chief Justice Peralta on 17 December 2020.

On 29 January 2021 and 26 February 2021, the SCEA sent separate letters to this Committee requesting for the extension of the relaxation of the guidelines on the wearing of prescribed office attire, in view of the still existing general community quarantine (GCQ), the entry of new variants of the Corona virus (COVID-19), and the increasing cases of the new COVID-19 variants in the country.

In its Memoranda dated 01 February 2021 and 26 February 2021, this Committee recommended the approval of SCEA's requests and the corresponding extension of the relaxation of the guidelines on the wearing of prescribed office attire in the months of February and March 2021. The said recommendations were favorably acted upon by Chief Justice Peralta, thereby allowing court employees to wear wash day clothes from 01-28 February 2021 and 01-31 March 2021, respectively.

***SCEA's 22 March 2021 Letter Requesting for
the Extension of the Relaxation of the Guidelines
on the Wearing of Prescribed Office Attire until
the implementation of the Modified General
Community Quarantine (MGCO)***

In a letter dated 22 March 2021, the SCEA again requested for the extension of the relaxation of the guidelines on the wearing of prescribed office attire in view of the "stricter general community quarantine (GCQ) status in Metro Manila and nearby provinces, and the surging cases of the difference variant of the Corona virus (Covid-19) in the country."

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The SCEA further requested that the relaxation of the said guidelines be in effect “even upon the imposition of the modified general community quarantine (MGCQ) or until Metro Manila has entered the new normal phase and the employees have been vaccinated.”

***15 April 2021 Online Meeting of the
Committee on Office Uniform in the
Supreme Court, the Presidential
Electoral Tribunal and the Lower Courts***

On 15 April 2021, this Committee held an online meeting via MS Teams to, among others, discuss the SCEA’s request. In its discussions, this Committee took into consideration the manifestation of Ms. Susan M. Doronio, SCEA Representative, that the request for the relaxation of the guidelines on the wearing of appropriate office attire was impelled by the plight of court employees who resort to walking or bringing their own motorcycles, scooters, or bicycles to work because of limited public transportation due to strict quarantine protocols. For this reason, it was the court employees’ request to be allowed to wear more comfortable attire, particularly denim or *maong* pants, while on official duty.

This Committee also took note of the SCEA’s request to extend the relaxation of the guidelines on the wearing of appropriate office attire until the implementation of the Modified General Community Quarantine (MGCQ) or until all employees had been vaccinated.

In its discussions, it was agreed that walking or using motorcycles, scooters, and bicycles in going to and from work while community quarantine is in place, allows court employees to avoid exposure to the COVID-19 virus, and, therefore, minimize their risk of contracting the disease whilst reporting for duty.

Further, this Committee noted that the Court had arranged for the inoculation of all justices, judges, court officials, and court personnel following the Judiciary’s inclusion in the A4 Group of the government’s vaccination program priority as approved by the National Task Force Against COVID-19 (NTF). Nonetheless, this Committee considered that even with the impending roll-out of the vaccination plan in May 2021, and the implementation of a less restrictive community quarantine, public transportation, though operational, will only be in such capacity and following protocols as may be provided for by the Department of Transportation.⁹ Thus, any level of community quarantine would result to limitations on the modes of transportation and access thereto, thereby subjecting our court personnel to risks to their health and safety.

The foregoing considered, this Committee resolved that the relaxation of the guidelines on the wearing of the prescribed office uniform would allow court employees ease of movement in travelling to and from their respective stations or place of work while community quarantine is in place.¹⁰ This Committee recommends the relaxation of the guidelines on the wearing of the prescribed

⁹ IATF Omnibus Guidelines on the Implementation of Community Quarantine in the Philippines, as amended, www.officialgazette.gov.ph (last visited on 18 April 2021).

¹⁰ Resolution No. 2021-1 dated 15 April 2021, Annex F.

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office uniform to take effect on 03 May 2021 until the implementation of the Modified General Community Quarantine (MGCQ). In effect, this would allow employees of the Supreme Court, the Presidential Electoral Tribunal, and the lower courts to wear wash day clothes during the said period, while on official duty, provided that their attire must be decent, presentable, and subject to the observance of the following:

1. Skirts should be at least knee-length (one inch above the knee is allowed).
2. Appropriate footwear shall mean closed formal shoes; however, mules, sling back shoes and peep-toe shoes are allowed.
3. The following are prohibited office attire when performing official functions:
 - a. Gauzy, transparent, or net-like blouses or shirts;
 - b. Sando, sleeveless, strapless or spaghetti-straped blouses, tank top (unless worn as undershirts), blouses with over-plunging necklines;
 - c. Collarless t-shirts; however, collarless blouses are allowed;
 - d. Micro-mini skirts, walking shorts, cycling shorts, leggings, tights, jogging pants, and pedal pushers;
 - e. Sandals and step-ins exposing the toes; and
 - f. Rubber sandals, slippers, and *bakya*.
4. The Identification Card (I.D.) forms part of the official uniform/appropriate office attire. Thus, it must be worn at all times while on official duty.
5. The foregoing shall be observed by all court employees, except personnel of the (1) Maintenance Division, Office of Administrative Services, (2) Security Division, Office of Administrative Services, (3) Medical and Dental Services, and (4) Philippine Judicial Academy Training Center (PTC), who shall wear the prescribed work attire suited for their respective duties (*i.e., cargo pants, scrub suits, PPE, security personnel attire, PTC attire, etc.*)

Recommendations

IN VIEW OF THE FOREGOING, the Committee on Office Uniforms for the Supreme Court, the Presidential Electoral Tribunal and Lower Courts, respectfully recommends that:

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- (1) the request of the Supreme Court Employees' Association (SCEA) to extend the relaxation of the Guidelines on the Wearing of the Prescribed Office Uniforms, as contained in their letter dated 22 March 2021, be **APPROVED**; and
- (2) the Guidelines on the Wearing of Appropriate Office Attire be **RELAXED** thereby allowing employees of the Supreme Court, the Presidential Electoral Tribunal, and the Lower Courts to wear wash day clothes, **effective 03 May 2021 until the implementation of the Modified General Community Quarantine (MGCQ)**, provided that all court employees shall wear **DECENT** and **PRESENTABLE ATTIRE** while on official duty, subject to the strict observance of the following:
 1. Skirts should be at least knee-length (one inch above the knee is allowed).
 2. Appropriate footwear shall mean closed formal shoes; however, mules, sling back shoes and peep-toe shoes are allowed.
 3. The following are prohibited office attire when performing official functions:
 - a. Gauzy, transparent, or net-like blouses or shirts;
 - b. Sando, sleeveless, strapless or spaghetti-strapped blouses, tank top (unless worn as undershirts), blouses with over-plunging necklines;
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 5. The foregoing shall be observed by all court employees, except personnel of the (1) Maintenance Division, Office of Administrative Services, (2) Security Division, Office of Administrative Services, (3) Medical and Dental Services, and (4) Philippine Judicial Academy Training Center (PTC), who shall wear the prescribed work attire suited for their respective duties (*i.e., cargo pants, scrub suits, PPE, security personnel attire, PTC attire, etc.*)

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For Your Honor's consideration and approval, please.

Maria Regina

MARIA REGINA ADORACION FILOMENA M. IGNACIO

Chairperson

Maria Carina M. Cunanan

MARIA CARINA M. CUNANAN

Vice-Chairperson

Corazon G. Ferrer-Flores

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Member

Caridad A. Pabello

CARIDAD A. PABELLO

Member

Donna Lynn U. Aricheta

DONNA LYNN U. ARICHETA

Member

-no part-

MARIETTA R. ESDREL ON

Member

-vacant-

**Representative from the
Office of the Chief Justice**

Member

-no part-

ELIZABETH S. TANCHOCO

Member (SCALE)

Susan M. Doronio

SUSAN M. DORONIO

Member (SCEA)

ty

MA. CRISTINA CARMELA I. JAPZON

Member (PACE)

FOR YOUR HONOR'S CONSIDERATION

Marife M. Lomibao-Cuevas

MARIFE M. LOMIBAO-CUEVAS
Clerk of Court
Supreme Court

APPROVED:

Alexander G. Gesmundo

ALEXANDER G. GESMUNDO

Chief Justice

Date: APR 22 2021

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[Signature]