



Carla Martinez & Ann Panteleakos



Attire Guide: Dress Codes from Casual to Black Tie

How to dress appropriately
for any occasion.



- Casual
- Dressy Casual
- Business Casual
 - Business
- Semi-Formal
 - Black Tie

Casual

Casual dress code refers to clothing that is informal and comfortable, yet clean and professional. It's best to go with nicer casual wear and avoid the baggier items you wear around the house.



Women

- Sundress
- Long or short skirt
- Khakis or nice jeans
- Shorts (depending on occasion and climate)
- Plain T-shirt (no slogans), polo shirt, turtleneck
- Casual button-down blouse



Men

- Khakis or nice jeans (clean, no holes)
- Cargo or Bermuda shorts—depending on occasion and climate
- Plain T-shirt (no slogans), polo shirt, turtleneck
- Casual button-down shirt and/or sweater
- Loafers, sneakers (with or without socks), sandals

Dressy Casual



A dressy casual or also known as a smart casual dress code is a versatile balance between formal and casual. This is the ideal choice for networking (or socializing) after work, fundraisers or dinner at a nice restaurant.

Women

- Dress
- Skirt and dressy top
- Dressy pants outfit
- Nice jeans and dressy top

Men

- Seasonal sport coat or blazer and slacks
- Dress shirt, casual button-down shirt, open-collar or polo shirt
- Optional tie

Business Casual



Casual business attire is pretty ambiguous but generally means slacks, khakis or a skirt with a dress shirt, blouse or polo. Dresses and seasonal sport coats fall into this dress code as well. The VFW Auxiliary button-down or polo shirts are great for business casual events.

Women

- Skirt, khakis or pants
- Open-collar shirt, knit shirt or sweater (no spaghetti straps or décolleté)
- Dress

Men

- Seasonal sport coat or blazer with slacks or khakis
- Dress shirt, casual button-down shirt, open-collar or polo shirt
- Optional tie
- Loafers or loafer-style shoes and socks

Business



A business dress code is characterized by a suit jacket with matching pants or a skirt. The darker the suit, the more formal. There are seasonal variations as well as matching accessories to personalize your look, but they should not be a distraction.

Women

- Suit
- Business-style dress
- Dress with a jacket
- Stockings (optional in summer)
- Heels, low or high

Men

- Dark business suit
- Matching vest (optional)
- Dress shirt
- Conservative tie
- Leather dress shoes and dark dress socks

Semi-Formal



A semi-formal dress code is best described as being more formal than what you would wear to an office, but slightly less formal than what you would wear to a formal event. Do keep in mind that if the event is later than 6 in the evening, you'll want to err on the side of formality.

Women

- Short afternoon or cocktail dress
- A "little black dress"
- Long dressy skirt and top
- Dressy separates

Men

- Dark business suit
- Matching vest (optional)
- Dress shirt
- Tie
- Leather dress shoes and dark dress socks



Black Tie



Black tie attire is the most common formal dress code for events such as weddings, proms, formal dinners and theatre.

Women

- Formal (floor length) evening gown
- Dressy cocktail dress or pants
- Your dressiest “little black dress”

Men

- Black tuxedo jacket and matching trousers
- Formal (piqué or pleated front) white shirt
- Shirt studs and cuff links
- Black bow tie (silk, satin or twill)
- Black cummerbund to match tie, or a vest (optional)
- Black dress shoes and socks
- *In summer, in the tropics or on a cruise:* Occasionally there is a request for a white dinner jacket, black tuxedo trousers plus other black tie wardrobe items, so check your invitation.

Attire Recap



“Dress for immediate credibility and success will follow.”

Sandy Dumont

As a leader in this amazing organization, the VFW Auxiliary, always check to see what the scheduled event requires you to wear. A picnic is different than a Voice of Democracy banquet.

Communication is Key – Including Attire

- Let everyone know what is expected. If you would like the members in uniform, say so.
- If they need a ball gown or tuxedo, tell them in enough time so they can pack one.
- If they need to be in your President's shirt tell them. (Remember you can order your shirt through the VFW Store, custom ordering.) Don't make them guess.
- Do not be the pin police. However, placement is as follows: VFW collar pin on the left over the heart. Flag pin should be the highest on the attire, also on the left side over your heart. The only pins higher than the Flag pin are the collar pins.



Things to Remember

- Smile
- Stand up straight.
- Do not slouch.
- Put your name tag on the right - so when you shake hands your name tag moves forward.
- Offer your business card.
- Iron your clothes when needed - be prepared.
- Arrive early or on time.
 - My Father use to say, "if you're on time, you're late."
- If there is no head table skirt, remember people can see your legs.
- Apologize if you make a mistake.
- Give and receive compliments.



Preparing for an Official Photo or TV Interview

1. Solid colors are better than prints, checks or plaids for photos and interviews. Bright colors are better than pastels.
2. In an interview, avoid dangly earrings, they can detract from what you are saying.
3. Be prepared for questions: Take a facts leaflet with you for reference. Have a couple ideas in mind to talk about. Bridge negative stories into positive responses.
4. Calm your nerves with long deep breaths.
5. Have a bottle of water if possible.

Using Your Cell Phone – While at the Head Table

- You can use your cell phone to take pictures and/or notes.
- You can check your phone if you are waiting on a response to questions asked at the meeting.
- You can glance at your phone to check texts. Sometimes it's something you need to be made aware of immediately.
 - i.e. can't hear on Zoom.
- Do not check emails
- Do not make or take calls
- Do not go on Facebook
- Do not text friends
- Do not play games
- You do not want to appear to be disengaged

It's my first banquet. What do I need to know when dining?

- Which fork do I use?
 - Start from the outside and work your way in toward the plate. Dessert forks or spoons are typically at the top of the dinner plate.
- Which bread plate is mine?
 - Think BMW - Bread - Meal - Water, Bread is to the left of your dinner plate and water is to the right.
- Waiters serve from the left and retrieve from the right.
- It is polite to wait to eat until all at the table are served. However, it is OK to start if the person waiting tells you to.



Protocol

Introductions

Start at the extreme left end of the head table, work your way in, then go to the far end of the right side. (not across)

Introduce invited guests with their title
i. e. Commander in Chief
John Doe

Introduce spouse/guest of invited guest with their name, then guest of the President (no need to say the President's name)

If there is a sub-head table, start there

Guests in the audience can be introduced during dinner

Speaking

- The first speaker should address the head table, others only need to address the hosts i.e., Dept. President & Commander. Also, any Representatives sent by National.
- Speakers are usually introduced in order, main speaker last.
- The final speakers should be the host. i.e., District Commander & District President if at a District function.
- Remarks should be brief and on topic. Know your audience. Watch your time. Don't ramble.
- Be prepared to speak anytime.

Other Protocols and Chain of Command

- Respect the Office.
- Work Together.
- Remember the Chain of Command.
- What happens when members directly contact the Auxiliary Headquarters.
- Voting Rights & Responsibilities
- VFW & Auxiliary - Same but Different
- Know the Bylaws - Don't Guess
- Say "Thank You," "Good Job"

