

APPEARANCE POLICIES: ONE SIZE DOESN'T ALWAYS FIT ALL

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Rich Meneghello's article "Appearance Policies: One Size Doesn't Always Fit All" was featured in *DJC Oregon* on July 1, 2015.

The Supreme Court recently decided a case that every employer will need to understand in order to stay on the right side of federal religious discrimination law. It ruled that retail clothing store Abercrombie & Fitch violated the law when it rejected an applicant who was wearing a Muslim hijab, saying she ran afoul of its appearance policies. Here are some lessons you can learn from that case to avoid the same fate.

Many people know Abercrombie as a stylish retail clothing company targeted mostly towards younger customers. What most don't know is that Abercrombie requires all of its employees to comply with a strict "look" policy intended to exemplify its "classic East Coast collegiate style of clothing." For example, sales-floor employees (whom Abercrombie refers to as "models") are prohibited from wearing black clothing and caps. Abercrombie claims that the "look" policy is vital to its "preppy" and "casual" brand.

In the article, Rich addresses the following topics:

- What employers should do, in the wake of this decision?
- Are appearance policies necessary?
- The importance of carefully tailoring your appearance policy.
- What to do if a conflict develops?

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Richard R. Meneghello

Chief Content Officer

[503.205.8044](tel:503.205.8044)

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