

Workplace Etiquette Guide

As CDC guidelines are allowing more in-person events and activities, many companies are slowing returning to the office. TMASF Connects has developed a guide on business etiquette and formalities in the COVID-19 era to assist your transition as you are preparing to or returning to the office.

Politeness

The Coronavirus outbreak has changed the way we interact with people. Typical gestures such as a handshakes or hugs have been put on pause to keep ourselves and people around us safe. However, we should continue to be polite, to be mindful and respectful of others' feelings. You may not be able to give a handshake to a colleague that you haven't seen in over a year, but a wave and smile shows that you have acknowledged them (elbow bumps also seem to be popular!). You should wear your mask where it is required, although it might impede the nonverbal ways we express ourselves, you can give someone a thumbs up or other positive hand gesture so they know you are trying to be polite even under your mask. Here are some additional [politeness guidelines](#) to show respect to your colleagues.

[Source Cite: AARP](#)

Dress Code

As businesses continue to return to the office, some employees are confused as to what they should be wearing to the office after a year and a half of working remotely in sweats and loungewear. Every employer will have a different dress code, and [Indeed](#) has put together some general examples on how to dress from casual to professional attire for work, abbreviated below.

Casual

Casual attire tends to be more [informal clothing](#). While some offices allow for casual attire, you will still probably need to dress professionally when you have an important meeting with clients or supervisors.





Business Casual

Business Casual is more formal attire. It is the most common type of dress for an interview or office setting. For women, business casual includes blouses, button down shirts, blazers, and pencil skirts. Men can wear polos, button downs, trousers, and slacks. [Click Here](#) are some more details on business casual attire.

Business Professional

Business professional attire is worn in office settings where dress codes tend to be stricter or more formal. They are most used in industries such as government, law, and finance. The key with business professional attire is to keep it conservative, wear soft prints, and sway towards neutral or dark colors. This [article](#) presents examples of business professional attire.



Business Formal



Business Formal indicates professionalism and is most common for special events such as award ceremonies or special dinners. Women should lean towards dark pants suits, skirt suit, dress suit with heels or flats. Men should aim for a dark suit and tie with a white or light button down shirt, and loafer shoes. Business formal has a more minimalist professional look, which is why it is typically reserved for special events.

Silence your Smartphone

After a year and a half of working remotely, many of us may have our phones off silent and on full volume (in case an important call comes through). In the office, however, recall that there is a time and place for you to use your smartphone such as during your lunch time or breaks. Your smartphone can also be a distraction to both you and your colleagues from being productive during work. It is also not appropriate to have it out during meetings with your boss. If you want to use your smartphone at work, be mindful of others around you. Make sure to turn off your ringer, so that others don't hear your notification sound. If you need to take a call, take it outside where you would not be distracting others. When you are in a meeting remember to put your phone away and engage your attention to what is important. These simple etiquette tips can prevent a stern talk from your managers or supervisors.

[Source Cite: The Balance Careers](#)

Online Etiquette

While some are returning to the office, you might be continuing to work remotely and want to learn more on how to be efficient and polite while doing so. Here are some tips on how to be practice etiquette while you are working remotely:

➤ Dress appropriately

Even though you might be in the comfort of your home, you are still on the job. Make sure you are as presentable as you can be for your video calls. You can put on an appropriate outfit that complies with your company's dress code and set up a virtual background. [Setting up virtual background](#) on Zoom can lessen distractions around you and gives a more professional look in your home office. Zoom offers many free professional [virtual backgrounds](#) for you to download.

➤ Mute your microphone when you are not speaking

If there are background noises on your end, [mute your microphone](#) so you aren't disrupting the person that is speaking. Be less intrusive and get your colleagues attention by utilizing chat features so you are not speaking over anyone.

➤ Look at your camera

When in person, you would not be looking into the distance when you conversate with a colleague. So, try not to do it while you are on a video call. It may be tempting to go on other tabs or check your email during a video call but try to make eye contact when someone is speaking. That way your team knows you are paying attention and engaged in the meeting.

➤ Tackle any technical issues in advance

Be prepared and ensure your computer is running smoothly and properly. You might run into problems as you are logging on to your laptop, account, or Wi-Fi. So, make sure you are prepared at least 10 minutes in advance before meetings to avoid being late or disrupting your team. You can also run a [speed test](#) to make sure your internet speeds are working as efficiently as you want them to.

Treat online work just as you would treat your traditional office work. Keep distractions at a minimum, keep practicing proper etiquette and be as polite to your coworkers as you would in person.

[Source Cite: The Washington Post](#)