

ICSI (Guidelines for Attire and Conduct of Company Secretaries), 2020

(as approved by the Council in its 266th Meeting held on 9th January, 2020 at New Delhi)

In exercise of the powers conferred by clause (1) of Part II of the Second Schedule to the Company Secretaries Act, 1980 as amended by the Company Secretaries (Amendment) Act, 2006, the Council of the Institute of Company Secretaries of India hereby issues the following guidelines:-

PREAMBLE

Attire reflect personality, lifestyle and standardisation of a professional more so when he appears before various quasi-judicial forums.

The recognition of company secretaries to appear before quasi judicial bodies on behalf of their clients is a privilege coupled with conditions. One such condition is to dress appropriately, support the court's authority and dignity and maintain decorum.

The dressing requirements for appearing before statutory bodies and quasi judicial bodies are unwritten. A company secretary appearing before any statutory body or quasi judicial body on behalf of his employer or clients stands there in his capacity as an officer of the court. He is duty bound to support the judge's authority and dignity by following the rules.

1. Short Title

These Guidelines shall be called the ICSI (Guidelines for Attire and Conduct of Company Secretaries), 2019.

2. Objective

The objective of issuing these Guidelines is to:-

- (a) Provide the rules of etiquette and decorum for appearance before the courts, statutory bodies and quasi judicial bodies such as NCLT, NCLAT, SEBI, CCI, etc.
- (b) Ensure respect for authority and to maintain dignity of the profession of company secretaries.
- (c) Prevent company secretaries from contemptuous behaviour to the judicial authorities.
- (d) Guide company secretaries as to which attire is considered unsuitable, unconventional or inappropriate and interfering with the orderly administration of justice.
- (e) Project a professional image amongst the regulators and build a brand for the profession of Company Secretaries.

3. Applicability

- 3.1 These Guidelines shall be applicable on all company secretaries appearing before any statutory body, courts, tribunals or quasi judicial bodies on behalf of their employer or their clients.
- 3.2 These Guidelines shall supersede the Guidelines for Professional Dress Code for Company Secretaries to appear before judicial / quasi-judicial bodies and tribunals like NCLT- NCLAT, SAT issued by the Council in its 243rd Meeting held on 27th March, 2017.
- 3.3 These Guidelines shall be applicable w.e.f 18th January, 2020.

4. Dress Code

The dress code to be adhered to by the members shall be as under:

4.1. For Male Members:

- a. Navy Blue Suit (Coat & Trouser), preferably with CS Logo/ Insignia
OR
Navy Blue Blazer over a sober coloured Trouser, Insignia
- b. Neck Tie (ICSI)
- c. White full sleeve Shirt
- d. Formal Shoes

4.2. For Female Members:

- a. Navy Blue corporate suit (Coat & Trouser), preferably with CS Logo/ Insignia
OR
- b. Saree / any other dress of sober colour with Navy Blue Blazer with CS logo, Insignia
- c. A sober footwear like Shoes/Bellies/Wedges, etc.

5. Restricted items of attire

5.1 The following items of attire shall not be worn in any case:

- a. Clothes that are too revealing or not fitting well.
- b. Unpolished shoes.
- c. Short or skirts.
- d. Scarfs, Caps, Hats and Helmet.
- e. Hand Gloves.
- f. Face Masks and veils.
- g. Sports shoes, slippers, sandals.
- h. Singlets, T-shirts, Jeans.
- i. Casual wear or traditional wear.
- j. Gaudy accessories of attire.
- k. Medallions, except where the professional has a constitutional right thereto.
- l. Medical equipment which would force the trial judge to either grant a continuance or influence the judge in any manner prejudicial to the administration of justice.
- m. Earphones, headphones and any other electronic communication equipment.
- n. Brightly coloured pieces of attire which may be disruptive, distractive or depreciative of the solemnity of the judicial proceedings.
- o. Pieces of jewellery or watches with the purpose to attract attention and amounting to exhibitionism.

6. Exceptions

6.1 Due care has been exercised not to impose rigid standards not directly related to judicial administration. Exceptions have however been made for the following:

- a. Turbans, may be worn for religious, cosmetic or other legitimate purposes in sober colours which do not distract the jury so as to interfere with or impede the functioning of the judicial authority.
- b. Head gear, adhering to good sense of community standards and having a balance between the professionals attire may be worn.

- c. Hearing aids, so that a person with hearing loss can listen, communicate, and participate more fully in daily activities.
- d. All male members shall be clean shaven, except when properly trimmed beards are adorned as a sign of self-expression, or as a religious or cultural symbol.

7. Etiquette When Attending Hearings

7.1 All members appearing before any quasi judicial body shall endeavour to adhere to the following:

- a. Do not enter the court room chewing gum, beetle leaf, tobacco, gutka or pan masala.
- b. Do not enter the court room in an inebriated state.
- c. Switch off all mobile and other beeping devices or put them on silent mode before entering the courtroom as these may disrupt the proceedings.
- d. Enter the courtroom silently and bow to the Judge as a sign of respect before proceeding to your seat.
- e. Silence must be observed at all times during the hearing.
- f. Ensure that all loose sheets of papers are securely fastened, indexed and tagged so as not to waste the time of the court in locating the documents.
- g. Behave in a polite and courteous manner with all present in the court room and maintain decorum.
- h. Make all efforts to support and complement court efforts and see that the administration of justice does not fail on account of apathy or neglect.
- i. Do not attempt to capture photographs or audio/video record the proceedings.
- j. As a sign of courtesy to the Judge, bow to the Judge just before leaving the courtroom.

8. Consequences of violation

Any non-compliance with these Guidelines shall render the PCS liable for action under the Company Secretaries Act, 1980 read with First Schedule and Second Schedule to the Company Secretaries Act, 1980.

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