

EASTERN CARIBBEAN SUPREME COURT
PRACTICE NOTE
No. 1 of 2015
COURT DRESS

This Practice Note is made pursuant to the inherent jurisdiction of the Honourable Chief Justice of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court.

1. INTRODUCTION

This Practice Note is applicable to Attorneys-at-Law and Solicitors who practice before the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court, which includes the Magistrates Courts, Industrial Court, High Court and Court of Appeal. It is also applicable to Registrars of the Supreme Court who are required to attend Court sittings.

Counsel are expected to demonstrate good judgment and professional taste in their court attire. Respect for the court and colleagues, as well as counsel's professional image should be the factors that are to be used by counsel to assess and ensure that their attire is appropriate and is in accordance with this practice note.

2. COLOURS

This section lays out the colours which are appropriate for court. Counsel appearing before any court, are not to wear bright and distracting colours. Permissible suit colours are black, navy blue and dark grey. These colours may be solid or pin-striped. Only solid or pin-striped white, navy blue, or dark grey inner shirts are permitted to be worn by male counsel. In the case of female counsel, only solid or pin-striped white, black, navy blue or dark grey inner shirts or blouses are permitted. Shoes must be black, navy blue, dark grey or dark brown in colour.

3. STYLE

For every court appearance, counsel are required to wear appropriate formal business attire.

For male counsel this includes suits, sports jackets and pants that are typical of formal business attire for work. Male counsel should wear appropriate coloured inner shirts as part of their attire. For all court appearances, except open court, male counsel must wear ties. These ties however should not contain dtstractingly bright colours.

For female counsel this includes pants and skirt suits, sports jackets and dresses with full length sleeves, all of which must be appropriate to a formal business attire environment. When inner shirts, blouses or bodices are worn these are to be of an acceptable colour as indicated in 2 above. Inner blouses or bodices with plunging and low cut necklines are to be discreetly worn and should not be excessively revealing. Skirts should be at least knee length or not more than one inch above the knee. Where pants or trousers are worn, they are to be the traditionally tailored type. Low cut or low rise trousers are not permitted. Generally, tight fltting and body hugging clothing is not permissible.

In the case of members of the Inner Bar appearing in open court, a black waistcoat with grey and black striped or solid black or grey trousers or skirts should be worn.

Closed shoes must be worn by all counsel. In the case of female counsel, pumps or closed shoes should be worn; Sling back shoes with closed fronts may also be worn. Open toe or peep toe shoes and sandals are not permissible. Any deviation from this must be approved by the court prior to counsel's appearance.

4. JEWELLERY AND ACCESSORIES

Jewellery and other accessories are permissible to the following extent;

At all times jewellery must be unobtrusive;

The wearing of extravagant designs and excessive amounts of jewellery should be avoided;

Eye-brow rings, nose rings, and other similarly non-traditional piercings must be unadorned when counsel is appearing before the court;

When counsel is robed, necklaces, broaches, bracelets and scarves must not be visible.

Where hosiery is worn, it should be plain and either sheer or opaque. Fish net, patterned and adorned hosiery is not permissible.

Hairstyles should be professional and appropriate for court, and should not be distracting.

Tattoos must not be visible.

5. APPEARANCES IN OPEN COURT

Counsel appearing in open court are expected to be fully robed, which includes gowns, wing collars and bands and cellarettes. When fully robed, counsel must wear appropriate attire above and under their gowns as outlined in the previous sections.

In the case of male counsel, court bands must be worn with the attachment being securely hidden under the collar of the shirt revealing only the tabs. Shirts must be plain white, collared and buttoned to close. Jackets and waistcoats must be fully buttoned at all times.

In the case of female counsel, collarets or full bib collarets must be worn on the inside of the inner-shirt or dress, with the attachment being securely hidden under the collar of the shirt or dress, revealing only the neck band and tabs.

Counsel must ensure that at all times gowns are properly fitted and not hanging loosely off the shoulder. Counsel are also not permitted to robe or disrobe in the court room while court is in session.

6. FAILURE TO HEAR COUNSEL

The presiding judge may refuse to hear counsel who is not appropriately dressed for court until and unless that counsel's attire meets the standard of dress directed in this practice note.

7. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Practice Direction will come into effect on the 1st day of March 2015.

Dated this 13th day of February 2015.

Dame Janice M. Pereira, DBE
Chief Justice