

## Working File

### Yes or no to summer clothes?

By Lisa van de Geyn

#### The scenario

After a long and icy winter, 31-year-old Kim Jones\* couldn't wait to break out her summer wardrobe. She has been working in the same office for six years, but her manager was replaced in the spring by someone new who dresses to the nines. To avoid any faux pas, Jones checked the employee handbook online, but it didn't have a clearly defined dress code. On the first double-digit-degree day of the season, she wore her jewel-toned flip-flops to work. When she walked into the office, her manager gave her the once-over, and Jones thought she noticed a disapproving look when her high-heel-wearing boss caught a glimpse of her sandals and sleeveless top.

#### How it played out

Jones immediately kicked off her flip-flops and changed into the pair of flats she kept under her desk. She also threw a cardigan over her sleeveless top.

#### The expert weighs in

"Most accountants are advised to dress for the client if they have meetings, but for a day in the office, business casual is common," says Erin Nadler, a fashion consultant and owner of Better Styled in Toronto. Of course, professional attire is still expected, so younger employees are wise to take their dressing cues from senior staff.

If your office has no specific dress code, Nadler offers these basic summer wardrobe guidelines: "Men can wear button-down short-sleeved shirts and dress pants; collared shirts tucked in with dress khakis; or lightweight sweaters with khakis. If jeans are allowed, try dark denim with a basic tee and a sport jacket. Women can wear skirts or dresses; coloured cropped pants and sweater sets; or long tunics belted with skinny pants." As for flip-flops — best to save them for the weekend.

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*Have you faced a tricky situation at work? How did you handle it? Send us your office anecdotes at: [tamar.satov@cica.ca](mailto:tamar.satov@cica.ca)*

\*Names have been changed