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## A sign of the times: Asante revises dress code

Asante is updating its dress code next month to permit visible tattoos and nose piercings. The new allowances still come with conditions – tattoos from the shoulders down only and discreet nose studs – but they're a departure from the current policy that prohibits any visible face piercings or tattoos.

"It's an acknowledgment of a cultural change," said Paul Macuga, who joined Asante as chief people officer in February. "Tattoos are much more common today and viewed differently than they have been in the past."

The revised dress code takes effect on Sept. 1. It stipulates that:

- All jewelry should be worn in moderation, and nose studs should be no larger than 1.5 mm. Any jewelry that poses a safety hazard or infection-control risk is still prohibited.
- Visible tattoos are permitted from the shoulders down — no neck or face tattoos. They can't depict anything offensive to protected classes under [Title VII](#) (age, race, religion, etc.).
- Management can still request that employees cover tattoos or remove piercings if they violate those criteria.



Asante's dress code has been in place since 1993, and it covers everything from personal grooming to clothing. With the growing prevalence of tattoos and piercings — an estimated 40 percent of young adults have tattoos and 19 percent have pierced noses — Asante's policy was beginning to affect efforts to recruit new talent.

"We've had to turn away extremely qualified people because they had tattoos on their hands," said Trisha Olsiewski, Asante's director of talent management.

The rest of the dress code remains intact. No jeans (except for employees participating in the annual Miracle Jeans Day), no open-toed shoes, sweatpants, shorts or tank tops. T-shirts are allowed only if they're part of a uniform. This includes wearing 15 Top T-shirts on the job unless approved by management. Rules also apply to strong fragrances, tobacco odor and employee badge placement (above the belt). Asante's dress code applies to all employees, although departments may have further regulations. You can find the revised policy on AsanteNET on Sept. 1.

"The overriding principle," the policy states, "is that employees are expected to dress appropriately for the type of work they perform and to meet the expectations of Asante's customers."

Questions? Contact Alicia Lorenz, HR director of employee and labor relations, at [Alicia.Lorenz@asante.org](mailto:Alicia.Lorenz@asante.org).