

Clothing Guide 2026

Shifts

Standard:

- Hand or machine stitched (subtle stitches, preferably hand-finished)
- Linen, cotton, or hemp that is white or natural in color
- Neck opening wide and low enough to barely show. (white gown)
- Sleeve cuffs that are closed with white/ natural ties (narrow) through buttonholes or cuff “links” or straight sleeves with no cuff

Exceeds Standard:

- Same as above but completely hand stitched

Unacceptable:

- Any and all synthetic fabrics,
- Longer than 3/4 length sleeves
- High necklines
- Grossly gathered draw-strings at neckline, or sleeve
- Neck ruffles exceeding 1/25 inches
- Lace ruffles

Stays

Standard:

- Machine or hand sewn
- Stays should produce a smooth conical torso
- Leather (lower sort impression)
- Worsted or Linen
- Partially or fully boned

Exceeds standard:

- Handsewn
- Fully boned
- Back and front laced or back lacing
- Back gap 2 - 3" with front edge to edge or for larger gaps (at front center)
- Must have a boned stomacher inserted and laced over.

Unacceptable:

- Proper gowns with no stays
- Stays as an outer garment
- "Bodices" as an outer garment

Pockets:**Standard:**

- Machine or hand sewn
- Worn under petticoats unless documented to appropriate station/ persona.
(Selling goods or at home)
- Appropriate fabrics, cotton, or linen
- Hand embroidered only for "upper sort" / class persona in rare occasions
- Should be bound at slit and edges

Exceeds standards:

- Same as above but completely hand stitched

Petticoats**Standard:**

- At least 2 machine or hand sewn petticoats
- Wool, Linen, Cotton (rarely), Silk (Upper class)
- Solid, balanced stripes, or documented prints that match a gown
- Outer petticoat length between ankle and lower calf
- Working petticoats on the frontier a fraction shorter
- Circumference 100" to 120"
- Waistbands - self fabric or narrow tape binding
- Slits for access to pockets at sides.
- Narrow hem must be hand finished and 1/4" finished

Exceeds Standard:

- Same as above but completely hand stitched

Unacceptable:

- Synthetic fabric
- One petticoat (Unless lower sort persona)
- Wide hems
- Modern or 19th Century Calicos, etc

Aprons

Standard:

- Machine or hand sewn
- Linen, Wool, Cotton (Dangerous around fires)
- Checked (not gingham)
- Stroke gathered
- Narrow (1/4") waistband - self fabric or tape
- Length and width sufficient to cover most of the petticoat front
- 1/4" finished hems

Exceeds Standards:

- Same as above but completely hand stitched

Unacceptable:

- No apron
- Wide hems
- Synthetic fabrics
- Printed or neon colored fabrics
- Drawstring aprons
- Aprons too short
- Aprons longer than petticoat
- Aprons too narrow
- Eyelet or bibbed aprons
- Ruffled, lacey, decorative aprons

Handkerchief / Neckwear:

Standard:

- Machine or hand hemmed
- White linen or cotton
- Colored, patterned (block printed or dyed)
- Wool worsted, wool flannel, linsey - woolsey, silk, cotton
- Large enough to drape around shoulders and cover bust
- Pinned outside in front or tucked in, outside at the back of gown and over shoulders
- May be worn between robings in lieu of a stomacher.

Exceeds Standard:

- Same as above but completely hand stitched

Unacceptable:

- No Handkerchief
- Handkerchief tucked into sides or back of gown neckline or exposing bust area
- Fringed or knitted shawls
- Modern fabrics or long modern scarves

Caps / Head covering:

Lappet Caps

Round Eared Caps

Dormeuse Caps

Handkerchief wrapped around head

Standard:

- Machine or hand sewn
- Fine white Linen or Cotton
- Cap at least 1" back from front of hairline (must show hair)
- Handkerchief tied around head - lower sort or inclement weather

Exceeds Standards:

- Same as above but completely hand stitched with silk ribbon

Unacceptable:

- Synthetic ribbon
- "Mob Caps"
- Caps worn lower on forehead or close around face with no hair exposed
- No cap

Hair/Makeup/Jewelry:**Standard:**

- Hair swept back and under cap
- Hair visible above forehead
- Short hair disguised as long hair
- Bangs pinned up
- No makeup (Light tinted moisturizer if invisible)
- Very limited - to no, jewelry- simple wedding bands okay
- Simple, narrow, silk ribbon, generally black that ties around the neck, usually on younger women
- Plain, straight, modern pins
- No visible tattoos unless documented "native"
- Social gathering very subtle rouge / lip balm only

Exceeds Standards:

- Same as above with additional volume at top of head using "rats" for appropriate situations

Unacceptable :

- Visible bangs hanging down
- Hair worn down
- Visible dyed hair of unnatural color
- Any jewelry or visible body modifications. (Piercings, gauges, non-period tattoos, etc.)

Hat/Bonnet/Hood***Hat***

- Flat shallow crown - 1/2" high
- Straw or silk covered no greater than 14"
- Tied with (silk) ribbons attached under brim

Bonnet

- Black, white, green, crimson, brown...
- Silk, satin, silk taffeta, sarsnet
- Wool durant or stuff (colder weather, working woman)

Hood

- Attached to cloak
- Not attached to cloak

Standard:

- Hand or machine stitched
- Bonnet, hat, hood
- All worn over a cap

Exceeds Standards:

- Hand stitched hat, hood, bonnet
- Period correct construction techniques

Unacceptable:

- Synthetic ribbons
- Hat folded down over ears
- No cap underneath
- Modern hats

Stockings

Standard:

- Machine or hand made
- White cream, natural, blue, brown, gray, black, red, yellow, green
- Cut and sewn from knit fabric using period accurate patterns
- Wool, linen, cotton knee socks if top is not visible
- Held up with garters / tape/ silk ribbons

Exceeds Standard:

- Densely knit stockings of wool, linen or cotton
- Colors same as above
- Frame knit shaped stockings knit flat and sewn up back
- Stockings knit in the round with faux seam of purl stitches up center back

Unacceptable:

- Striped
- Synthetic
- Athletic socks
- Elaborate knit patterns / cables/ textures
- Diced highland hose

Shoes

Standard:

- Machine stitched or hand stitched
- Appropriately styled shoes with period-style buckles and black leather uppers
- Appropriately styled shoes with ties (“one” hole only on each latchet), for a lower sort impression
- Moccasins (Pucker toe or center seam. Brain tan or vegetable tanned leather)

Exceeds Standard:

- Hand- constructed
- Appropriately styled shoes with period- style buckles and black leather uppers

Unacceptable

- Shoes with no distinct heel
- Obvious fake buckles
- Obvious modern shoes (Including but not limited to hiking boots, sneakers, lug soles, mary janes, ect.)
- Leather knee-high fringed mountain man style moccasins

Eyeglasses

Standard:

- Period-appropriate frames with small round or oval lenses
(If you have medical condition that requires tinted lenses, please contact CRVE at charles.jones@dcr.virginia.gov)

Exceeds Standards

- Period-correct glasses with round lenses

Unacceptable

- Modern- framed glasses
- 19th century oval frames
- Tinted sunglasses

Gowns /Bed gowns /Jackets

Standard:

- Hand or machine sewn
- Period appropriate colors
- Gowns should be worn with stays
- Fitted short gowns and jackets should be worn with stays
- Bed gowns and loose jackets can be worn without stays (please wear a sports bra if there are no stays. These are work/ frontier type garments primarily for work and undress situations.)
- Bed gowns and loose jackets are worn by lower sort, accessories such as handkerchief, apron, etc, should match that station. (Colored handkerchief instead of crisp white, checked apron, or colored instead of sheer cottons or linen, plain linen cap as opposed to finer linen one, moccasins, mules, bare feet instead of fine silk shoes, etc)

Exceeds Standards:

- Same as above

Unacceptable:

- Stomacher front gowns without stays
- Riding habits unless you are portraying upper sort and on a horse
- Sleeveless bodices
- Any fitted garment without stays
- Garments made from modern printed style calicos, paisleys, etc.

Cloaks/Mitts

Cloak

Standard:

- Hand or machine sewn
- Wool
- Unlined, except for hood lining
- Lining of silk, linen or wool
- Ties with silk or wool tape
- Red, blue, black (mostly)
- Includes hood, cape, or both

Exceeds Standard:

- Same as above but completely hand stitched

Unacceptable

- Kinsale cloak style unless documented (Possibly for Irish)
- Large metal clasps
- Synthetic fabric or patterned fabrics

Mitts

Standard:

- Wool, Linen, Silk, Leather
- Can be lined
- Cut on bias of cloth
- Fingerless gloves
- Point over top of hand
- Knitted woolen mittens which accommodate thumb (half thumb but not individual fingers)

Exceeds standards:

- Same as above but completely hand stitched

Unacceptable:

- Modern gloves
- Fingerless gloves