

Personal Appearance Standards

801.1 VERSION

Review Date	Effective Date	Approving Authority
02/18/19	07/09/18	Eric D. English, Chief of Police

801.2 POLICY AND PURPOSE

This policy provides guidelines for the personal appearance of members of the Harrisonburg Police Department.

Harrisonburg Police Department employees shall maintain their personal hygiene and appearance to project a professional image that is appropriate for this department and for their assignments. Department personal appearance standards are primarily based on safety requirements, appearance conformity and the social norms of the community served, while considering matters important to employees of the Harrisonburg Police Department.

Requirements for department uniforms and civilian attire are addressed in the Uniforms and Civilian Attire Policy.

801.3 ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

All employees are expected to fully comply with the guidelines and timelines set forth in this policy. Responsibility rests with the supervisor to ensure that any violations of policy are investigated and appropriate training, counseling and/or disciplinary action is initiated. This directive is for internal use only, and does not enlarge an employee's civil liability in any way. It should not be construed as the creation of a higher standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party claims. Violation of this directive, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department, and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.

801.4 DEFINITIONS

Offensive - Depicts nudity or sexual conduct; relates to symbols, causes, ideas or strategies of a particular party or group in politics; demeans or degrades a person or group on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin or gender; is affiliated with, depicts, or symbolizes philosophies or organizations that advocate hatred or intolerance based on race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, age, or disability; advocate or engage in illegal discrimination, violence or other unlawful means of depriving individual rights under the U.S. or Virginia Constitution.

801.5 GROOMING

Unless otherwise stated and because deviations from these standards may present officer safety issues, the following appearance standards shall apply to all employees, except those whose current assignments would deem them not applicable, and where the Chief of Police has granted an exception.

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Any employee who has a condition due to a protected category (e.g., race, physical disability) that affects any aspect of personal hygiene covered by this policy may qualify for an accommodation and should report any need for an accommodation to the Chief of Police. Those with medical conditions requiring an accommodation will need to present to their supervisor a doctor's note specifying the condition, treatment and timeline. If there is no timeline, then a re-evaluation of the condition will need to be done annually.

801.5.1 PERSONAL HYGIENE

All employees must maintain proper personal hygiene. Examples of improper personal hygiene include, but are not limited to, dirty fingernails, bad breath, body odor and dirty or unkempt hair.

801.5.2 HAIR

Hair shall be clean, neatly trimmed or arranged, and of a natural hair color. Hairstyles with shaved designs in the scalp are prohibited. Hair adornments shall be primarily for the purpose of securing the hair and must present a professional image.

Hairstyles for male department employees must not extend below the top edge of a uniform or dress shirt collar while assuming a normal stance.

When working a field assignment, hairstyles for female department employees must not extend below the bottom edge of a uniform or dress shirt collar while assuming a normal stance. Longer hair shall be worn up or in a tightly wrapped braid or ponytail that is secured to the head above the bottom edge of the shirt collar.

801.5.3 MUSTACHES

Mustaches shall not extend below the corners of the mouth or beyond the natural hairline of the upper lip and shall be short and neatly trimmed.

801.5.4 SIDEBURNS

Sideburns shall not extend below the bottom of the outer ear opening (the top of the earlobes) and shall be trimmed and neat.

801.5.5 FACIAL HAIR

Facial hair, other than sideburns, mustaches and eyebrows, is prohibited, unless authorized by the Chief of Police or the authorized designee.

801.5.6 FINGERNAILS

Fingernails shall be clean and neatly trimmed to a length that will not present a safety concern. The color of fingernail polish shall present a professional image.

801.6 APPEARANCE

801.6.1 JEWELRY

For the purpose of this policy, jewelry refers to rings, earrings, necklaces, bracelets, wristwatches and tie tacks or tie bars. Jewelry shall present a professional image and may not create a safety

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concern for the department member or others. Jewelry that depicts racial, sexual, discriminatory, gang-related or obscene language is not allowed. See the Uniforms and Civilian Attire Policy for jewelry specifications that apply while wearing the department uniform.

- (a) Necklaces shall not be visible above the shirt collar.
- (b) Earrings shall be small, worn only in or on the earlobe. Earrings shall be limited to one earring per ear.
- (c) One ring or ring set may be worn on each hand of the department member. No rings should be of the type that would cut or pose an unreasonable safety risk to the member or others during a physical altercation, if the member is assigned to a position where that may occur.
- (d) One small bracelet, including a bracelet identifying a medical condition, may be worn on one arm.
- (e) Wristwatches shall be conservative and present a professional image.
- (f) Tie tacks or tie bars worn with civilian attire shall be conservative and present a professional image.

801.6.2 TATTOOS

While on-duty or representing the Harrisonburg Police Department in any official capacity, tattoos of an offensive nature shall not be apparent or visible. This applies to all sworn and non-sworn personnel.

801.6.3 BODY PIERCING OR ALTERATION

Body piercing (other than earlobes) or alteration to any area of the body that is visible while on-duty or while representing the Harrisonburg Police Department in any official capacity, that is a deviation from normal anatomical features and that is not medically required, is prohibited. Such body alteration includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) Tongue splitting or piercing.
- (b) The complete or transdermal implantation of any material other than hair replacement (i.e., foreign objects inserted under the skin to create a design or pattern).
- (c) Abnormal shaping of the ears, eyes, nose or teeth (i.e., enlarged or stretched out holes in the earlobes).
- (d) Any branding, scarification or burning to create a design or pattern of an offensive nature.

801.6.4 DENTAL ORNAMENTATION

Dental ornamentation that is for decorative purposes and that is not medically required is prohibited while on-duty or while representing the Harrisonburg Police Department in any official capacity. Such ornamentation includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) Objects that are bonded to front teeth.
- (b) Gold, platinum or other veneers or caps used for decorative purposes.

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- (c) Orthodontic appliances that are colored for decorative purposes.

801.6.5 GLASSES AND CONTACT LENSES

Eyeglasses and sunglasses shall be conservative and present a professional image. Contact lenses with designs that change the normal appearance of the eye and that are not medically required are prohibited while on-duty or while representing the Harrisonburg Police Department in any official capacity.

801.6.6 COSMETICS AND FRAGRANCES

Cosmetics shall be conservative and present a professional image. Use of cologne, perfume, aftershave lotion and other items used for body fragrance shall be kept to a minimum.

801.6.7 UNDERGARMENTS

Proper undergarments shall be worn as necessary for reasons of hygiene and general appearance standards.

801.7 RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION

The religious beliefs and needs of department members should be reasonably accommodated. Requests for religious accommodation should generally be granted unless there is a compelling security or safety reason and denying the request is the least restrictive means available to ensure security or safety. The Chief of Police should be advised any time a request for religious accommodation is denied.

Those who request to wear headscarves, simple head coverings, certain hairstyles or facial hair for religious reasons should generally be accommodated absent unusual circumstances.