



Ocean City Police Department

General Order

Subject: General Appearance Standards		No. G.O. 800 A -1	
Rescinds: C.O.P. 006-14	Amends: G.O. 800 A-1 (4/11/12)	Related Directive: S.O.P. ADM 008, G.O. 200 B-2	
Approval Date: May 27, 2014	Effective Date: May 29, 2014	Distribution Date: May 29, 2014	Distribution Type: A
References:			

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I. Purpose:

One of the qualities that define a professional organization is the exemplary appearance of its employees. Achieving and maintaining the highest standard of professionalism is a primary objective of the Department.

The entire Department is often judged by the appearance of a single employee; therefore, the dress and grooming of all employees must establish and maintain the credibility and professional standards of the Department.

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines pertaining to the grooming and appearance of employees such that employees project a neat and professional image consistent with the expectations of the public and of the Department.

II. Definitions:

A. **Body Mutilation:** Intentional and deliberate altering of any part of the human body for non-medical reasons by branding, filing, cutting, scarring, piercing, or stretching of the skin. This does not include the standard piercing of the earlobe. Examples: A split or forked tongue, foreign objects inserted under the skin to create a design or pattern, gauging, intentional scarring, abnormal filing of teeth.

B. **Business Attire:** Business attire is considered civilian clothing.

For male employees business attire consists of a business suit, or sport coat, collared, cuffed, and button down dress shirt with necktie, dress pants, belt, socks and dress shoes. Pants shall extend to the ankle.

For female employees business attire consists of a business suit, or dress slacks or skirt, blouse, and a business jacket and closed-toe dress shoes. Skirts shall extend downward from the waist so that the hem of the skirt is no higher than two inches above the knee. Slacks shall extend to the ankle.

C. **Civilian Clothing:** Any garment or article of clothing that is not issued to the employee by the Department, or is not authorized for wear as part of a uniform.

D. **Employee (s):** For purposes of this policy, employees are persons who perform services for or on behalf of the Department and whose duties and assignments are directly controlled by the Department.

E. **Gauging:** The intentional non-medical expansion of a hole or piercing in the skin anywhere on the body, commonly seen on the ears, face, nose, or tongue.

F. **Non-Sworn Employee (s):** Any employee that is not a police officer

G. **Sworn Employee (s):** Employees who are police officers vested with law enforcement authority

- H. **Uniform:** Issued Departmental Class “A”, “B”, “C”, “D” or “E” uniforms or other authorized, and recognized uniform items as described in Department policy or approved by the Department.
- I. **Tattoo :** The intentional marking of the skin of the human body by inserting pigment below or on the skin for the purpose of creating a pattern, design, form, figure, or any other similar art, whether permanent or temporary.

III. **Policy:**

All on-duty employees will maintain a neat and well-groomed appearance and will comply with departmental standards for the wearing of uniforms, other clothing, and grooming as regulated by approved Departmental policy and practice.

IV. **General Appearance**

The following guidelines apply to all employees while on-duty, while wearing any uniform of the Department or while representing the Department in an official capacity, unless otherwise exempted or clarified by this policy.

The Chief of Police reserves the right to determine appropriate attire for Department employees and these guidelines are not meant to be all inclusive. Final judgment concerning questions about compliance rests with the Department. In the event an employee is uncertain about policy compliance, other attire should be worn until specific permission is obtained.

- A. Employees are required to appear neat, clean, and well-groomed at all times, except when authorized by the Department to appear otherwise;
 - 1. Shirts that are designed to be tucked into pants shall be neatly tucked
 - 2. Clothing shall be kept clean and pressed
 - 3. Approved footwear will be worn
 - 4. Text, pictures, emblems, or other markings on t-shirts worn underneath of outer garments shall not be visible through the outer garment
 - 5. Appropriate undergarments shall be worn at all times, in the manner intended by the manufacturer, and shall not be intentionally visible through or outside of an employee’s clothing.

B. Unacceptable Attire

Employees shall consider the following list as guidance and examples of unacceptable attire;

- 1. Shorts, Capri pants, sweat pants, leggings, jeans or pants styled like jeans, any cut-off or un-hemmed slacks or skirts, bib overalls

2. Sweatshirts, tank tops, t-shirts, halters, tube tops, midriffs, other “half-shirts”
 3. Sandals, flip-flops, or other causal “beach” type shoe, athletic shoes except as authorized for specialized assignments
 4. See through material, leisure wear, and sleepwear.
- C. Employees shall bathe regularly to prevent odors from the body.
- D. Hair
1. General
 - a. The length and bulk of the hair shall not interfere with the proper wearing of any authorized uniform headgear. Hair in front will be groomed so that it does not fall below the band of properly worn headgear.
 - b. Hair sculpturing is prohibited.

Examples: Mohawk style haircut, words or designs cut or shaved into the hair, the use of hair gels, mousses, waxes, or similar products to sculpt or shape the hair into non-traditional styles
 - c. Hair coloring, if used, must appear natural.
 - d. Ponytails, braids that are not tightly secured to the head and plaited hair are prohibited.
 - e. Hair nets are prohibited.
 - f. Wigs or hairpieces shall not be worn on duty except to cover natural baldness or disfiguration. If worn under these circumstances, the wig or hairpiece will conform to all Department hair regulations.
 2. Male Employees
 - a. Male employees shall wear their hair in a tapered or squared look on the back of the head.
 - b. Ribbons or ornamentation in the hair are prohibited
 - c. When combed, male hair shall not extend over the top of the ear, the top of the shirt collar, or the eyebrows.
 - d. Sideburns shall be neatly trimmed and shall not extend below the middle of the ear, shall be of even width, and shall end with a clean shaven horizontal line.

- e. Mustaches are permitted but shall be well trimmed and shall not exceed the corners of the mouth or over the upper lip.
- f. Beards, goatees and all other facial hair are prohibited. Employees with a medical skin condition (ex; pseudofolliculitis barbae) may request an exemption from the Chief of Police. In such cases where an exemption is granted, the employee shall maintain the facial hair in a well-trimmed and tightly groomed manner.

3. Female Employees

- a. When wearing a Departmental uniform except as provided in “b” below, female employees shall wear their hair so that it does not extend over the bottom edge of the shirt collar.
- b. When wearing civilian clothing or Class “D” Training/Utility Uniform, female employees shall wear their hair in a combed and neatly styled manner
- c. Ribbons or ornaments worn in the hair are prohibited except as provided in “d” below.
- d. Inconspicuous hair pins or conservative clips or bands that are worn for the sole purpose of holding the hair in place are permitted. These objects shall be similar in color to the natural hair or will be solid black or navy blue in color.

E. Colognes / Perfumes

Colognes, perfumes, body sprays, body lotions or like products may be used sparingly such that the odors emanated from those products do not disturb other persons.

F. Wearing of Firearms

Unless exigent circumstances exist, on-duty sworn employees wearing civilian clothing shall wear and carry authorized firearms so that the firearms are properly holstered and are concealed from public view. When off-duty, sworn employees shall wear and carry firearms consistent with General Order 200 B-2.

G. Body Ornamentation

The wearing or display of body ornamentation is a form of personal expression that may not portray the desired image of the Department. A significant part of the Department’s mission is accomplished by maintaining a neutral look for all employees that creates public confidence, does not detract from a professional appearance, is not distracting, distasteful or offensive to others, and does not create a safety concern.

The purpose of this section is to promote the uniformity of employee appearance for the purpose of identification of employees to the public, to maintain neutrality

and the perception of neutrality amongst members of the public, to prevent discrimination or the perception of discrimination by members of the public, and to foster discipline and encourage public confidence in members of the Department.

1. Jewelry

- a. When wearing a Departmental uniform, the only permissible visible jewelry shall be;
 - i. Approved medical ID bracelets
 - ii. No more than two rings, worn on the fingers. Any ring worn will be of a conservative design, shall be metal tone in color and of the type which is designed for, and fits on only one finger. The combination of an engagement ring and wedding ring shall be considered one ring.
 - iii. One watch of conservative design worn on the wrist. Watches shall be black, brown and/or metal toned in color.
 - iv. The wearing of all other visible jewelry, including but not limited to jewelry worn in or on the ears, tongue, face, or other parts of the body, is prohibited; except as described in "b" below.
- b. When wearing civilian clothing, female employees may wear no more than two stud-type or small hoop earrings in the lobe of each ear. Any earrings worn shall be metal-tone in color/finish.

2. Fingernails

- a. Employees shall keep fingernails clean and trimmed to a length that allows the proper discharge of duties without injury to oneself or others.
- b. Fingernail polish is acceptable, so long as it is clear, natural, or beige in appearance. Other nail ornamentation is prohibited.

3. Dental Ornamentation

Teeth, whether natural, capped or veneer, shall not be ornamented with designs, jewels, initials, or any similar adornment. The use of gold, platinum, silver or other veneers or caps on the teeth for purposes of ornamentation is prohibited.

4. Tattoos

- a. Tattoos on the hands, neck, face, scalp, or head are prohibited.
- b. Offensive tattoos are prohibited anywhere on the body. Examples of offensive tattoos include, but are not limited to those that;
 1. Are gang related, or are representative of criminal organizations in any manner,
 2. Depict nudity or are sexually suggestive or explicit,
 3. Include profane or vulgar words or phrases,
 4. Advocate racial, ethnic, religious or sexual hatred or discrimination of any protected class, or
 5. In any way undermine the Town's or Department's values and mission.

The Department shall be the final authority in determining if a tattoo is considered offensive.

- c. Employees who are on-duty, are wearing any uniform of the Department or are representing the Department in any official capacity shall conceal all permitted tattoos with;
 1. Authorized uniform items; or
 2. Civilian clothing when the employee is not wearing a uniform.
- d. Employees hired prior to April 4, 2012, will not be required to conceal documented tattoo(s) received prior to said date, provided the tattoo;
 1. Is not offensive as described in "b" above; and
 2. The tattoo is still considered exempted from concealment as of April 21, 2014.

5. Body Mutilation

Visible body mutilation on any part of the body is prohibited.

6. Cosmetics

Cosmetics are permitted and shall be used sparingly and shall appear natural.

7. Eyewear

Eyewear may be worn, on the face, as intended by the manufacturer that meets the following standard;

- a. Eyewear frames shall be shades of black, brown, gray or metal tone in color/finish.
- b. Mirrored lenses are prohibited
- c. Eyewear will not be attached to chains, bands, or ribbons
- d. Sunglasses shall not be worn indoors.

8. Other

The wearing or display of any other visible body ornamentation not specifically named, including bracelets, ribbons, wristbands, earrings, and necklaces is prohibited.

9. Applicant Screening Requirement

- a. The Training and Recruiting Section shall be responsible for screening all applicants for employment for compliance with Section "IV, G", subsections 3, 4, and 5 of this policy as part of the applicant process.
- b. Applicants for employment who are not in compliance with this policy shall be disqualified from employment consideration unless they are able to be in compliance.

V. Exemptions and Limitations

The following employees are exempt from the standards set forth in Section IV of this policy as follows;

- A. Employees assigned to or detailed to non-uniform special assignments that, for a legitimate law enforcement purpose, require an inconspicuous appearance, to the extent that the employee will be able to be in compliance with this policy when no longer in a position requiring an inconspicuous appearance.

Grooming and appearance standards for those employees will be established and approved by the appropriate Division Commander in accordance with the needs and circumstances of the special duties to be performed by the employee. This exemption prohibits the wearing or display of anything that;

1. Is gang related, or are representative of criminal organizations in any manner unless required by the special assignment,
2. Depicts nudity or is sexually suggestive or explicit,

3. Includes profane or vulgar words or phrases,
 4. Advocates racial, ethnic, religious or sexual hatred or discrimination of any protected class,
 5. In any way undermine the City's or Department's values and mission, or
 6. Creates a safety concern for the employee exempted, or others.
- B. Employees detailed to Departmental functions, training or other assignments by Special Order where the Special Order directs a specific uniform or attire.
- C. Employees who, because of a unique or unusual job assignment, have obtained written permission from the Department to be exempted from a specific section(s) of the policy

VI. Courtroom Appearances

- A. When an employee is summoned to appear in court in an official capacity pursuant to official Departmental business, the following guidelines shall apply;
1. Non-Sworn employees shall wear business attire or the issued Class "E" uniform of the day
 2. Sworn Employee's shall wear business attire or the issued Class "A", Class "B" or Class "C" uniform of the day except as provided in "3" below
 3. Sworn Employees summoned to appear in the DISTRICT COURT may wear Class "D" Bike Patrol, Mounted Patrol, K-9 Patrol or Police Officer Trainee Uniforms for the DISTRICT COURT appearance only when;
 - a. The employee's District Court appearance is scheduled during normal duty hours, or
 - b. When the employee's District Court appearance is scheduled contiguous with the start or end of the employee's duty hours

Example: Employee was assigned to Midnight Watch bike patrol that ended at 0730 hours and is scheduled for District Court at 0900 hours
 4. Hats shall not be worn in the courtroom
- B. When an employee is summoned to appear in any court as a private citizen or for private, personal activities unrelated to the employee's official public duties as a Department employee, the following guidelines and restrictions shall apply;
1. Employees are prohibited from wearing Ocean City Police Department uniforms while appearing in court or entering the courthouse.

2. Employees shall comply with all firearms regulations as dictated by the specific court in which the employee appears or enters.
3. Employees are prohibited from wearing or carrying firearms when appearing as a criminal defendant in any court proceeding arising from any private or personal activities.

VII. Training Attendance

When an employee is assigned by the Department or by the Town of Ocean City to attend training, and the special order assigning the employee to the training does not specify the attire, the following guidelines shall apply;

- A. Employee's shall wear the Class "B", "C" or "E" uniform of the day as described in Department policy, or;
- B. In lieu of the uniform of the day, employees may wear;
 1. Business attire, or;
 2. Class "D" Training/Utility Uniform, or;
 3. Attire that complies with the dress policies of the training facility where the employee is attending training.