

Asheville Police Department Policy Manual

Chapter: 3 - Code of Conduct

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Policy: 303 - Grooming and Appearance

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Previously: 1120 - Uniforms and Equipment



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Associated Directives

[Policy 302 - Uniform Standards](#)

Introduction

This policy provides grooming and appearance standards for department members. For information regarding uniform standards, refer to Policy 302 – Uniform Standards.

Policy Statement

This policy provides officers with department requirements for on-duty appearance related to grooming and personal hygiene. The professional appearance of Asheville Police Department (APD) employees furthers the department's goals by projecting a positive and professional image to the public.

Defintions

Body Piercing: holes intentionally made in parts of the body other than the earlobes to insert rings or other decorative objects.

Rules And Procedures

303.1 Exceptions And Accommodations

- A. Exceptions to grooming and appearance standards may be made for officers working undercover assignments or in other specialized assignments as authorized by a division commander or above.
- B. The chief of police may consider exceptions and accommodations on a case-by-case basis. Such accommodations may be appropriate in cases where an employee demonstrates a religious or medical need for an exception. In such cases, the employee will discuss the need via their chain of command to the chief.
- C. The chief of police may approve temporary department-wide exceptions at their discretion (e.g., special events or charity fundraisers).
- D. The chief of police or designee has final authority in determining acceptable standards for employee grooming and appearance.

303.2 General Appearance Standards

- A. Employees will wear the appropriate clothing or uniform, be properly equipped and well-groomed, and exhibit a professional appearance while performing their official duties.
- B. Makeup will be conservative and natural-looking and will be applied to blend with skin tone.
- C. Teeth, whether natural, capped, or veneered, will not be ornamented with designs, logos, jewels, initials, etc. Using gold, platinum, silver, or other veneer dental caps for ornamentation is prohibited. The unnatural shaping of teeth for non-medical reasons is prohibited.
- D. Fingernails will be clean, neatly trimmed, rounded, and kept to a reasonable length. Visible nail polish must not detract from a professional appearance in uniform.
- E. Employees are expected to maintain their hygiene in a manner that does not negatively affect co-workers or citizens in the workplace. Complaints regarding an employee's hygiene should be brought to the appropriate supervisor's attention, preferably in writing, for appropriate action. Supervisors should first meet with the affected employee privately to discuss the complaint and allow the employee the opportunity to correct the deficiency.

303.3 Head Hair

- A. Uniformed employees must keep their hair clean, neatly groomed, and styled in a manner that does not interfere with their assigned duties.
 - 1. Sworn employees must style their hair in a manner that does not interfere with uniform headgear or any specialized equipment and will not interfere with the officer's safety and effectiveness.
 - 2. The hair length for sworn employees must not extend beyond the top edge of their uniform collar while on duty. Hair of sworn employees that exceeds collar length must be pulled back, pinned, or otherwise fastened to not interfere with their uniform or equipment or pose a risk to the officer's safety and effectiveness.
 - 3. Cornrows, braids, or dreadlocks may be worn as long as they don't interfere with the proper wearing of required headgear, conform to the above length requirements, and are neat in appearance. Wigs or hairpieces may be worn if they conform to the standards for natural hair.
 - 4. Hair will not be cut or shaved so that letters, wording, designs, logos, or symbols are visible.
 - 5. Employees may color their hair with no more than two unnatural colors, and dyeing patterns or prints are not permitted.
- B. The hair of non-uniformed employees will be kept neat, clean, and professional in appearance and must not interfere with the ability to complete job tasks.

303.4 Facial Hair

- A. Employees may grow facial hair that does not exceed four (4) centimeters and is neat and well-trimmed. The mustache, beard, or goatee may not be unsightly.

303.5 Jewelry

- A. Employees are permitted to wear jewelry that is professional in appearance, inoffensive, and does not interfere with their assigned duties or pose a risk to the safety of others.
- B. Uniformed employees may wear jewelry that does not detract from a professional appearance in uniform.
 - 1. Rings are limited to two (2) per hand (wedding and engagement rings worn together are considered one). Rings, especially those on trigger

finger(s), must not interfere with the safe use of equipment or hinder the employee's ability to use their hands or fingers.

2. Bracelets and watches are limited to one (1) per arm (except for medical alert bracelets) that are of conservative size and appearance, do not include charms or other attachments, and would not interfere with duty requirements or create a safety risk.
3. Necklaces and neck chains of small diameter are permitted if they do not hold multiple or lengthy attachments, can be worn under an officer's uniform, and would not create a safety risk.
4. Officers may wear studs or other earrings that fit closely against the ear and do not extend below or around the earlobe.
5. Body piercings other than earrings may not be visibly ornamented while on duty.

303.6 Tattoos and Body Modification

- A. Intentional, non-medical body modification that cannot be concealed or eliminated is prohibited. Examples may include split tongues, gauged piercings, and facial implants.
- B. Department members are permitted to display tattoos while on duty; however, the chief of police or designee has discretion on a case-by-case basis to require tattoos to be covered and to determine reasonable and practical methods to conceal such tattoos.
 1. Visible tattoos will not be offensive, obscene, or otherwise inappropriate.
 2. Tattoos, brandings, or intentional scarring that are gang-related, that convey sexual, racial, religious, ethnic, or related intolerances, or that portray derogatory or offensive characterizations contrary to the values of this department are prohibited.
 3. Tattoos, branding, or intentional scarring are prohibited on the face, neck, ears, or scalp. Tattoos may not be visible on the collarbone area and must be covered. Exceptions for permanent makeup (e.g., eyeliner, lip liner) may be made.
 4. Tattoos may be required to be concealed for certain special assignments and/or ceremonies, such as public safety funerals, protective details, court hearings, or as directed.

By order of:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "ML LA". The signature is written in a cursive, stylized font.

Michael Lamb
Chief of Police