



Kinston Police
Department

POLICY: Personal Appearance & Uniform

POLICY #:

200-11

NCLEA Standards: 1.08; 1.23

CALEA Standards:

NCLM Standards:

Effective Date:

<input type="checkbox"/> New	Revision Dates:	01/01/21	08/12/21	02/04/25			07-01-2019
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Approval: Chief of Police

I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for Kinston Police Department authorized uniforms and civilian attire and personal appearance. It is established to ensure that uniformed members will be readily identifiable to the public through the proper use and wearing of office uniforms, and that the appearance of members who wear civilian attire reflects favorably on the department.

II. POLICY (NCLEA 1.23)

Employees of the Kinston Police Department are expected to present a neat, clean appearance to the general public and to maintain a professional image in hairstyles and dress codes. The following regulations apply to all police personnel while in uniform (except narcotics detectives) or while on duty.

IV. GROOMING (NCLEA 1.23)

All department 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. Any member who has a condition due to a protected category 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 Chief.

Fingernails

Both male and female fingernails must be neat in appearance and trimmed to a length that allows the proper discharge of duties without injury to oneself or others. The color of fingernail polish shall present a professional image.

Hairstyles

Employee hairstyles shall not interfere with nor prohibit the wearing of required headgear or other safety equipment. Hair bulk should not be excessive or appear unkempt.

The hairstyles of male officers, both uniformed and non-uniformed, shall be neatly trimmed and shall not extend over the top of the shirt collar when the officer is standing. A sworn officer's hair length, or any male employee who wears a uniform, shall not fall below the eyes, in front, not extend below the top of the ear on the sides. Sideburns will not extend below the ear lobes. Sideburns may not flare wider than their top width.

Female uniformed police officers' hair will be neatly and inconspicuously fastened or secured in a bun, single ponytail, two braids or a single braid. Multiple locks, braids, twists or cornrows may come together in one or two braids or a single ponytail. Braids and singular ponytails may be worn down the center of the back in all uniforms, but length will not extend past the bottom of the shoulder blades while at the position of attention. There is no minimum length for the wear of a ponytail or braid. Pins, barrettes, and hair combs worn while in uniform should be conservative and shall correspond to the employee's hair color. The length of the hair should not hinder an Officer's performance or present a safety risk.

Scalp sculpting, exotic styling, and radical or unusual hair dying is prohibited. (Examples: green, purple, multi-colored patterns or anything in an "unnatural" style) All employees may wear wigs that conform to the above standards.

Facial Hair

Facial hair is allowed in the form of a beard, mustache, or goatee. If a mustache is worn, it must be trimmed neatly and may not extend below the corners of the mouth or over any portion of the upper lip, and may not extend on the cheek area. A goatee must be worn with a mustache. Faddish beard and moustache styles such as Fu Man Chu, Handlebars, Pencils, Toothbrushes, Dali, Zappas, Mutton Chops, Chin Curtains, Bandholz, or the like are strictly prohibited.

All facial hair will be trimmed, clean, and well-groomed. Facial hair, if worn, shall be at least $\frac{1}{4}$ inch in length and no longer than $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in length, and must present a professional, conservative appearance. Department members who choose to keep a neatly trimmed beard must also keep the neck cleanly shaven.

Beards, goatees, and mustaches must be "filled in" within two weeks of growth. Facial hair that exhibits patchiness or incomplete growth will not be permitted. Officers are not permitted to be in a state of constant beard growth (i.e. shaving and starting a new beard a few weeks later).

Any supervisor may order an officer to shave a beard, moustache, or goatee that does not conform to these standards. The Chief of Police has final authority concerning approved facial hair, and reserves the right to restrict the privilege of wearing facial hair at any time to preserve the image of the Department and profession.

When required to wear a gas mask/respirator, officers will be required to fully shave their beard or goatee in order to ensure proper fit of the gas mask. Mustaches may remain. Circumstances requiring a gas mask may include but are not necessarily limited to: fit testing and incident response requiring a gas mask (e.g. clandestine lab, riot, etc.). This requires immediate access to shaving supplies, which are supplied by the officer and may be kept at the Police Department. This provision is required in order to comply with safety standards established by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the City of Kinston, and the gas mask/respirator manufacturer(s).

V. APPEARANCE

Jewelry

Sworn police personnel and other uniformed employees are prohibited from wearing jewelry or other body ornaments while on duty or while in uniform with the following exceptions: wristwatch, medical bracelets, and rings on fingers. Religious or other medallions and chains are permitted as long as the medallions and chains are concealed beneath the shirt. Female officers and other uniformed female employees may also wear a single set of conservative post-style earrings in the earlobe while in uniform.

Piercings

All employees are prohibited from wearing visible jewelry or ornaments that require piercing of the body, with the exception of earrings for women, while they are at work (excluding the Narcotics Division). 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. Branding, scarification or burning to create a design or pattern.

Dental Ornamentation

Dental ornamentation that is for decorative purposes and that is not medically required is prohibited while on-duty or while representing the Kinston 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.
- c. Orthodontic appliances that are colored for decorative purposes.

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 Kinston Police Department in any official capacity.

Cosmetics and Fragrances

Perfumes, cosmetics, and personal hygiene must be professional and must not be offensive to the general public or co-workers.

Tattoos

Visible tattoos are discouraged; however, if worn, they must not be offensive to the general public in regards to race, religion, politics, gender, or sexual content. Tattoos, which are not approved as listed above, may be concealed by covering makeup consistent with the member's skin tone or clothing. Any other method for covering must be approved by the Chief of Police.

VI. UNIFORMS (NCLEA 1.23)

The Chief of Police or designee shall maintain and update uniform and equipment specifications. Uniforms shall be worn as described therein and as specified in this policy.

The following shall apply to those assigned to wear department issued uniforms:

- a. Uniformed employees must wear Department issued law enforcement uniforms.
- b. Uniforms and equipment shall be maintained in a serviceable condition and shall be ready at all times for immediate use. Uniforms shall be neat, clean and appear professionally pressed.
- c. Uniformed employees must wear black undershirts and black socks while in the Department uniform.
- d. Officers in a non-uniformed assignment shall possess and maintain at all times a serviceable uniform and the necessary equipment to perform uniformed field duty.
- e. Office and Administrative staff shall wear appropriate casual business attire or approved Department polo shirts.
- f. Members shall wear only the uniforms specified for their ranks and assignments.
- g. Uniforms are only to be worn while on-duty, for court, at official department functions or events, while in transit to or from work, or when authorized by the Chief or the authorized designee.
- h. Members are not to purchase or drink alcoholic beverages while wearing any part of department issued uniforms, including the uniform pants.
- i. All supervisors will perform periodic inspections of members under their command to ensure conformance to this policy.

Insignia, Patches and Badge

Only the following elements may be affixed to department uniforms unless an exception is authorized by the Chief of Police:

- a. Shoulder patch – The authorized shoulder patch supplied by the Department shall be machine stitched to the sleeves of all uniform shirts and jackets.
- b. Badge – The department-issued badge, or an authorized cloth replica, must be worn and visible at all times while in uniform.
- c. Nameplate – The regulation nameplate, or an authorized cloth nameplate, shall be worn at all times while in uniform.
- d. Rank insignia – The designated insignia indicating the member's rank must be worn at all times while in uniform.
- e. Merit insignia/Service Ribbons – Those insignias obtained through Awards Board nomination or achievement including job specific pins (ex. SRO, FTO, K9) shall be worn above the right chest pocket.
- f. An Expert Pistol award is obtainable by achieving a 95% shooting score on day and night time qualifications with duty handgun only.
- g. Specialized pins authorized to be worn on the left chest pocket flap are S.W.A.T. emblem pin or Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) pin. Only one pin is allowed to be adhered in this manner.

Annually, Officers will be allowed to display the KPD Pink Patch for the month of October. Sergeants will also display pink sergeant stripes and for those wearing long sleeve uniforms, pink service strips will be displayed.

Mourning Band

Uniformed members may wear a black mourning band across the department badge whenever a law enforcement officer is killed in the line of duty or as directed by the Chief of Police. The following mourning periods will be observed:

- a. Kinston Police Department Officer – From the time of death until midnight on the 14th day after the death.
- b. An Officer from this or an adjacent county – From the time of death until midnight on the day of the funeral.
- c. Funeral attendee – While attending the funeral of an out-of-region fallen officer.
- d. National Peace Officers' Memorial Day (May 15) – From 0001 hours until 2359 hours.
- e. As directed by the Chief of Police.

VII. UNIFORM CLASSES

The Chief of Police or the authorized designee shall determine the uniform to be worn by each department member or any deviations that may be authorized.

Uniforms are classified as follows:

- a. Class A – Dress issue uniform to be worn by sworn officers.
- b. Class B – Standard issue uniform to be worn by sworn officers.
- c. Class C – Non-specific attire to be worn by designated department members.

Class A Uniform

The Class A uniform consists of the following:

- a. Issued long sleeve shirt. Long sleeve shirts must be buttoned at the neck and the cuff.
- b. Long sleeve shirt must be worn with a black, breakaway tie and the issued tie tack.
- c. Issued trousers
- d. Black Patent Leather duty-belt shall be equipped as needed for the member's assignment
- e. Black socks (unless medical exception)
- f. Black patent leather footwear will be the authorized footwear.

Class B Uniform

The Class B uniform consists of the following:

- a. Long or short-sleeve polo or dress shirt with the collar open
 1. All shirt buttons must remain buttoned except for the top button at the neck
 2. Long sleeves with buttons must be buttoned at the cuff
- b. Black trouser
- c. Flat nylon webbing belt may be worn
- d. Shoes shall be professional in appearance. Utility shoes/boots or all black athletic shoes are permitted.
- e. Inner or outer department issued ballistic vest
- f. Weather appropriate items
 1. Issued winter headgear
 2. Issued Rain gear
- g. Headgear – Department issued baseball cap with department patch sewn on front.

Class C Uniform

The Police Chief or the Division Major will define the primary uniform of the day for certain units to be worn by members, such as, Canine Handlers, the Special Response Team, Crime Lab, Training Uniform and other specific assignments.

Sworn Member Attire Not Wearing Issued Uniform

Whenever an employee of the Kinston Police Department is on duty, the employee is expected to exercise good taste in their mode of dress. It shall NOT be acceptable to appear in clothing that is unprofessional, sloppy, or inappropriately revealing.

- a. Attire shall fit properly, be clean and free of stains, and not be damaged or excessively worn.
- b. Variations from this policy are allowed at the discretion of the Chief or the authorized designee when the member's assignment or current task is not conducive to wearing such clothing.
- c. No item of attire may be worn while on-duty that would adversely affect the reputation of the Kinston Police Department or the morale of the members.
- d. The following items shall not be worn while on-duty or when representing the Department in any official capacity:
 1. Clothing that reveals cleavage, the back, chest, stomach or buttocks
 2. T-shirt alone or exposed undergarments
 3. Swimsuits, tank tops, tube tops or halter tops
 4. Sweatshirts, sweatpants or similar exercise clothing
 5. Spandex-type pants or transparent clothing
 6. Denim pants of any color prohibited except when expressly permitted by the Chief of Police and based on work activity.
 7. Shorts
 8. Clothing, buttons or pins displaying racial, sexual, discriminatory, gang related or obscene language
- e. Clothing that is acceptable:
 1. Suits
 2. Coats and ties
 3. Dress skirts/slacks
 4. Dress shirts/blouse
 5. "Dockers / Chino" style pants
 6. Dresses and skirts (are acceptable provided they are no shorter than 2 inches above the knee)

Civilian Attire (NCLEA 1.23)

There are assignments within the department that do not require a uniform because recognition and authority are not essential to their functions. There are also assignments for which civilian attire is necessary.

- a. Civilian attire shall fit properly, be clean and free of stains, and not be damaged or excessively worn.
- b. Members assigned to administrative, investigative and support positions shall wear business appropriate clothing that is conservative in style.
- c. Variations from this policy are allowed at the discretion of the Police Chief or the authorized designee when the member's assignment or current task is not conducive to wearing such clothing.
- d. No item of civilian attire may be worn while on-duty that would adversely affect the reputation of the Kinston Police Department or the morale of the members.

e. The following items shall not be worn while on-duty or when representing the department in any official capacity:

1. Clothing that reveals cleavage, the back, chest, stomach or buttocks
2. T-shirt alone or exposed undergarments
3. Swimsuits, tank tops, tube tops or halter tops
4. Sweatshirts, sweatpants or similar exercise clothing
5. Spandex type pants or transparent clothing
6. Denim pants of any color are prohibited except when expressly permitted by the Chief of Police and based on work activity or on approved dress-down Friday.
7. Shorts
8. Clothing, buttons or pins displaying racial, sexual, discriminatory, gang related or obscene language

VIII. OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT (PERSONAL EQUIPMENT) (NCLEA 1.08)

Any items that are allowed by the Kinston Police Department but that have been identified as optional shall be purchased entirely at the expense of the employee. No part of the purchase cost shall be offset by the Department.

Maintenance of optional items shall be the financial responsibility of the purchasing employee (e.g., repairs due to normal wear and tear).

Replacement of items listed in this policy as optional shall be managed as follows:

- a. When the item is no longer functional because of normal wear and tear, the member bears the full cost of replacement.
- b. When the item is no longer functional because of damage in the course of the employee's duties, it shall be replaced in accordance with the Department Owned and Personal Property Policy.

IX. UNAUTHORIZED UNIFORMS, EQUIPMENT AND ACCESSORIES

Kinston Police Department employees may not wear any uniform item, accessory or attachment unless specifically authorized by the Police Chief or the authorized designee. (NCLEA 1.08)

Department members may not use or carry any safety item, tool or other piece of equipment unless specifically authorized by the Police Chief or the authorized designee.

X. ENFORCEMENT OF THIS POLICY

All Supervisors are responsible for the on-going of their personnel and for the immediate correction of identified discrepancies on a daily basis. Supervisors shall observe personnel for general appearance, neatness, compliance with uniform and dress codes, and readiness for duty including condition and placement of issued equipment. Uniform and inspection reports will be conducted monthly on sworn personnel.

XI. EXCEPTIONS

Police officers assigned to the Special Investigations Unit or otherwise operating in an undercover capacity are excluded from the above hairstyle and appearance standards when such exclusion is approved by the Chief of Police. Any other exceptions will be at the discretion and approval of the Chief of Police.