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***Division of Institutions  
Policy and Procedure***

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**Chapter:** J  
**Section:** .0200  
**Title:** Appearance and Grooming  
Regulations  
**Issue Date:** August 6, 2024  
**Supersedes:** June 3, 2024

**I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to establish and define grooming standards for the North Carolina Department of Adult Correction (DAC), Division of Institutions (DOI).

**II. APPLICABILITY**

This policy applies to all full-time and part-time personnel of the DOI and any person providing services within DOI in a contractual, internship, temporary, volunteer, or other capacity.

**III. DEFINITIONS**

**A. Business Casual**

Attire that is less formal in appearance than professional attire but remains appropriate for a conservative office environment.

**B. Business Professional**

Attire that is considered to be appropriate in a conventional, conservative business setting (i.e., men's and women's suits, sportscoats, dresses, dress shirts, dress pants, ties, and scarves).

**C. Non-uniformed Personnel**

Personnel of DOI and any person providing services with DOI who are not required to wear a uniform to perform the functions of their work assignments and are not specifically covered under the uniformed personnel within this policy.

**D. Uniformed Service Personnel**

Personnel of DOI and any person providing services within DOI who occupy a uniform issued position.

**IV. POLICY**

- A.** It is the policy of North Carolina Department of Adult Correction, Division of Institutions that uniformed and non-uniformed personnel represent a professional and dignified image,

commensurate with their responsibilities, in order to instill public confidence and establish respect of the general public and from those offenders under the supervision of DOI.

- B. Employees and Independent Contractors of DOI are public servants. A high standard of professionalism shall be maintained consistent with safety and security standards and the correctional environment in which employees work. While on duty, employees, to include contractual employees, with the exception of independent contractors, shall adhere to the acceptable standards of dress and grooming as set forth within this policy.
- C. Appearance and grooming standards are based on several elements including safety and security, neatness, cleanliness, safety, and uniformity in appearance and standards. The standards established here are not intended to be overly restrictive nor are they designed to isolate DOI personnel from society. The limits set forth are reasonable, enforceable, and ensure that personal appearance promotes a professional image.
- D. It is the responsibility of the Deputy Secretary, Directors, Region Directors, and Wardens to ensure that staff under their supervision comply with the appearance and grooming regulations set forth in this policy.

## V. PROCEDURES

### A. All DOI Personnel

- 1. The general attire of uniformed and non-uniformed personnel staff reflects a dignified and professional image. All clothing must fit properly and be in good repair. Shorts, sweatshirts, sweatpants, and see through clothing are prohibited. Appropriate undergarments must be worn. Clothes that expose cleavage, midriff and/or have plunging necklines and/or are backless are prohibited. The wearing of jeans is limited to approved jeans/casual dress day events as designated and approved by the Warden/designee. In addition to fitting properly, jeans must be in good repair, to include, but not limited to, no rips, holes, or tears.
- 2. Uniformed and non-uniformed personnel shall present a professional and dignified image when attending meetings, conferences, or other business functions as a representative of DOI.
- 3. Wearing of political badges, buttons, shirts, pins, etc., is always prohibited.
- 4. Jewelry shall be limited to small items worn in moderation. Female staff may wear earrings which represent a professional appearance and are not excessive. Pierced jewelry will be limited to ears and should not be in quantity to delay prison entrance procedures. Any damaged or lost personal jewelry is not reimbursable by the State.
- 5. Except as otherwise permitted by this policy, while on duty, the wearing of any object inserted into an exposed body part that has been pierced is also prohibited. Examples

include the tongue, nose, lip, eyebrow(s), etc. Prohibited objects include, but are not limited to jewelry, posts, straw, or toothpick material.

6. All hairstyles must be kept in a neat, clean manner, not to detract from one's personal appearance as a professional and shall not provoke undue personal attention. Patterns or designs cut into the hair are not permitted. Coloring of the hair is permitted, but the color must be a naturally occurring hair color. Staff will not be restricted as to the length of their hair. However, for safety and security reasons, certified staff must have long hair secured at the top of the collar or above. This also applies to Program staff when manning a security post. Wigs, hairpieces, or weaves should be of a good quality and fit, present a natural appearance, and conform to the grooming standards set forth above. Hair, wigs, hairpieces, weaves, etc. are subject to search per DOI policy SM .3700, Prison Accessibility.

Additionally:

- a) Uniformed Personnel – Hair shall be evenly cut and neatly groomed. The hair length for the back may touch the top edge of the collar. Hair longer than shoulder length must be pulled back, pinned up, etc., to achieve desired length. Hairstyles must not hinder the correct wearing of the uniform hat.
  - b) Non-Uniformed Personnel – Hair must be well groomed and neat and worn in such a way that quick and easy identification is not impeded. The style of the hair shall not present a ragged, unkempt or extreme appearance. Certified non-uniformed staff shall maintain their hair length to top edge of collar with hair longer pulled up to top edge of collar.
7. A wig or hairpiece lost or stolen while at work or on duty, on or off grounds, shall be immediately reported.
  8. Beards, goatees, and sideburns may be no more than 1/2" in length and should be neatly trimmed and groomed. Mustaches, by themselves, may not extend beyond the corner of the mouth or upper lip line on the ends. Handlebar mustaches are not authorized. Managers may require clean shaven appearance based on certain duty assignments requiring the use of personal protective equipment such as Scott Air Packs, or other personal protective equipment in compliance with standards and proper facial fit test for the equipment that they are expected to use.
  9. Makeup may be worn in moderation and must be of natural skin tone.
  10. The Warden/designee shall make the final decision regarding appropriate attire and appearance. If the Warden/designee determines the attire is inappropriate, the individual

shall be sent home on their own time and expense to change their clothing. The employee may be required to return to work at the discretion of the Warden/designee.

11. The Warden/designee may approve occasional dress down days for special events or fund raisers so long as it does not present a safety and security issue with any DOI policy.
12. Uniformed and non-uniformed personnel staff shall dress in a manner distinguishable from the offender uniforms at their work site. Additionally, any attire and/or appearance that may pose a security risk, to include, but not limited to, the wearing of attire made of camouflage or camouflage-like material may be prohibited at the discretion of the Warden/designee.
13. Uniformed and non-uniformed personnel must observe good habits of grooming and personal hygiene. If an employee is responsible for an unpleasant or distracting fragrance/odor, a supervisor may ask the employee to leave the workplace until the problem is resolved. If the problem persists, an employee may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.
14. The wearing of sunglasses indoors is prohibited. For the purpose of this policy, the definition of sunglasses does not include photochromic prescription eyeglasses that darken on exposure to specific types of light of sufficient intensity or tinted prescription lenses. Exception to this policy may be made in accordance with DAC Americans with Disability Acts (ADA) Policy & Procedures.
15. This policy does not preclude an employee from requesting a reasonable accommodation for religious practice which they may be entitled to under the provisions of DAC policy [DAC-HR-200-03](#), Religious Accommodation.

**B. Uniformed Staff**

1. All uniformed personnel shall report to work in a clean, neat uniform. Uniformed personnel shall always wear the complete uniform while on duty. No uniformed personnel shall wear the uniform or any part of the uniform while off duty unless the individual is preparing to go on duty or is in the process of leaving the tour of duty. Personnel stopping anywhere before or after work shall be in complete uniform or they shall change completely out of the uniform. No partial dress of the uniform is permitted. The uniform shall not be worn in any situation that would bring discredit to the agency including, but not limited to, purchasing, or drinking alcoholic beverages, and entering an establishment that provides adult entertainment and/or gambling/gaming.

2. Uniform shirts shall always be tucked into the uniform pant, to include when employees are entering and leaving the worksite, away from the facility on official assignment, on and off duty, unless an exception is granted for specific reason(s) by the managing officer/designee.
3. Authorized footwear for uniformed custody staff should be the 5.11 A.T.A.C. black boots of leather and nylon composition. All boots must present a polished appearance. When boots or oxford shoes are worn, only black socks are permitted. If white socks must be worn for purposes of foot hygiene, they should be worn under the black socks. Staff requiring orthopedic shoes must comply by purchasing a uniform style orthopedic footwear in similar like style and black in color. The style of orthopedic shoes must be approved by the Warden/designee.
4. Comprehensive Health Services and staff assigned to recreation shall be permitted to wear athletic shoes as part of their standard uniform.
5. Jewelry shall be limited to rings, watches, necklaces, bracelets, tie tacks, post-type stud earrings, pins, and buttons, as well as all jewelry issued by DOI. Jewelry shall be worn reasonably and shall not distract from a professional appearance nor impede or delay prison entrance policy. Any damaged or lost personal jewelry or other non-required equipment is not reimbursable by the State.
  - a) Rings – No more than one ring may be worn on each hand except that a combination engagement and wedding band may be worn. Rings may not be worn on thumbs. Rings which restrict the wearing of gloves, shooting of firearms, have sharp projections which snag or cut, or otherwise create an undue hazard may not be worn while on duty.
  - b) Necklaces/Bracelets/Watches/Pins – Necklaces and chains worn are to be concealed while on duty. Necklaces and chains of significant strength, which may choke an employee, should not be worn while on duty. One wristwatch and a conservative style medical alert identification necklace or bracelet will be considered acceptable. Ankle bracelets are prohibited from being worn while on duty. No other visible body rings or jewelry except as allowed will be permitted to be worn while on duty.
  - c) Earrings – (Female staff only, Male staff are not approved to wear earrings) For safety purposes no hoop, dangling, or oversized earrings may be worn. Earrings that distract from the professional appearance should not be worn. Visible body piercings, other than approved earrings, will be prohibited while on duty.
  - d) Pins/Buttons – Pins or buttons not issued by the DAC must be no larger than ½" x 1" in total size. The pin/button shall be centered on the flap of the right shirt pocket or worn on the right side of the shirt if there is no pocket. At any given time, staff personnel are limited to wearing only one pin/button not issued by the DAC. The pin/button shall not be inflammatory or derogatory and shall be worn only with the approval of the Warden/designee.

- e) Fingernails shall not extend beyond  $\frac{1}{4}$ " past the end of the fingertip. Nail polish must maintain a professional appearance.
- f) Only the top button of the uniform shirt may be unbuttoned if a tie is not worn. If worn with an open collar, black, navy, gray, or white undershirts or tee shirts may be worn under the uniform shirt. A turtleneck or long sleeve shirt using the same colors may be worn in cold weather. Polo colors other than white for supervisors and gray for sergeants and officers are not permitted. Those choosing to purchase the polo shirt must adhere to the requirements of this policy regarding the placement of DAC approved patches. An employee wishing to have their shirt embroidered may do so at their own expense and must meet the specifications of the DAC Patch. The employee is permitted to include the institution's acronym under the shield. The acronym can be embroidered within the shield at the bottom or centered under the shield.
- g) The name badge is an issued uniformed item which shall be worn on or above the right pocket of the shirt or the upper right chest area of the jacket.
- h) The insignia bars are an issued uniformed item and shall be cloth unless metal has been approved by the Warden/designee. The insignia bars are issued uniform items for sergeants, lieutenants, and captains. Insignia bars shall be centered on the collar, one inch up front the point.
- i) The DAC patch shall be worn by custody personnel and other uniformed personnel as set and designed by DOI. This includes any jackets, toboggans, hats, etc.
- j) Uniformed staff shall be issued and wear the DOI approved winter jacket.
- k) While on duty, food service personnel shall have their head covered with a uniform cap, hair net, or other adequate hair restraints. Aprons worn with the uniform shall be clean and neat. Custody staff assigned for security are not required to wear a head covering.
- l) The Physicians and Nurse Practitioner's will have the option to receive 2-White lab coats or 2-Seal Blue jackets; or a combination of the two.
- m) All Custody staff are issued a DOI badge. Staff Warden level and higher shall be issued a gold badge and staff below Warden level shall be issued a silver badge. Uniformed staff shall wear the badge on their belt. Non-uniformed staff shall wear the badge on their belt, or shirt or coat pocket.
- n) Exceptions to the uniform requirements may be made for special circumstances, such as training and unusual work environment, at the discretion of the Warden/designee. Uniformed personnel required to report to work for any reason in clothing other than the designated uniform shall be required to adhere to the standards within this policy for non-uniformed personnel.

C. Non-Uniformed Personnel

1. All non-uniformed personnel shall dress in either business casual or business professional attire and report to work in clean and neat clothing. Shirts and pants must be free of wrinkles.
2. Jewelry shall be limited to small items worn in moderation. Non-uniformed personnel may wear earrings that present a professional appearance and are not excessive.
3. Fingernails shall be reasonable in length. Nail polish must maintain a professional appearance.
4. The following is a list of acceptable clothing for non-uniformed personnel.
  - a) Khaki's, dress slacks, dress shirts, blouses, sweaters, turtlenecks, etc. must be business casual or dress. Blouses must cover the midriff and cleavage. Capri pants must extend to the middle of the calf or longer.
  - b) Business casual in the office. Business professional for meetings.
  - c) Skirts and dresses shall be no shorter than the top of the kneecap.
  - d) Shoes may be dress or business casual and shall be appropriate for a professional office atmosphere. Flip-flops and shower clogs may not be worn. Dress sandals may be worn dependent upon the safety considerations and at the discretion of the Warden/designee.
  - e) Non-Uniformed staff can be approved to wear a hat for outside assignments. The hat must be present a professional non-offensive image and must be worn straight and not tipped forward, backwards or to the side.
  - f) Belts may be dress or casual. Metal or chain like belts are prohibited. Buckles must be reasonable in size and shall not bear messages that are offensive or inflammatory.
  - g) Appropriate under garments must be worn. Tight to form fitting apparel such as leggings, or compression garments may be worn as undergarments, e.g., under skirt or pants, but are prohibited when worn as an outermost garment.
5. Exception to the clothing lists may be made for special circumstances, such as training and unusual work environments, at the discretion of the Warden/designee.

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