



ADMINISTRATIVE MANUAL

ADM - 230 – GROOMING & APPEARANCE STANDARDS

Amends/Supersedes: ADM-230 (06/11/2021)

Date of Issue: 05/11/2026

I. GENERAL

- A. As Newport News Police and City representatives, all employees will maintain a professional appearance while at work. As the situation dictates, an employee's supervisor may **temporarily** suspend or modify the standards within this policy, with the concurrence of the appropriate Bureau/Precinct/Division commander.
- B. While in uniform, Police Aides and Parking Enforcement Officers will adhere to the same appearance and grooming standards as sworn personnel in uniform.
- C. Uniformed employees will wear their uniform, in its entirety, in accordance with [ADM-520 Issuance & Wearing of Uniforms & Equipment](#).
- D. This policy applies to all employees when on duty, and whenever wearing a department issued/approved uniform whether on or off duty.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Appropriate footwear: Footwear that is safe and functional for the employee's job tasks.
- B. *Body Art*: Any visible tattoo, brand, or other similar body decoration that is not covered when the employee is wearing department-approved attire.
- C. *Bulk*: The distance the mass of hair protrudes from the scalp.
- D. *Business attire*: Clothing that is conservative, tailored, and displays a professional appearance. Business attire includes slacks, dresses, skirts, collared button-down shirts with ties, blouses, blazers, and sports coats. Suits are considered formal business attire.
- E. *Business casual attire*: Clothing that is less formal and conservative than business attire but still displays a professional appearance. Business casual attire includes slacks or pants, dresses, skirts, collared button-down shirts without a tie, sweaters, knitwear, and polo/golf shirts.

NOTE: Business casual may also include solid color pants and shirts with the city seal or department badge embroidered on them.

- F. *Casual attire*: Clothing that is not meant to display a professional appearance. Casual attire includes jeans, cargo/BDU/tactical pants, t-shirts, and sweatshirts. Shorts, athletic wear and flip-flops are prohibited.
- G. Functional attire: Clothing and accessories that do not interfere with the employee's ability to perform job functions or compromise their safety.
- H. *Mid-ear*: Halfway between the top and bottom points of attachment of the ear to the head.
- I. *Natural in color*: Hair colors that exist without the aid of dyes or additives (e.g. blonde, brown, black, auburn).
- J. *Polo style shirt*: A polo style shirt refers to a traditional knit sports shirt, with a front button placket and a collar.
- K. *Visible*: Perceptible to the eye.



III. GUIDELINES FOR GROOMING AND APPEARANCE

A. Hairstyles

1. Head hair must be clean, of a natural color and styled/arranged so it does not interfere with job functions.
2. Hair styles must not interfere with wearing issued headgear. Unbound hair will not protrude from a hatband, except at the back of the head, where it may not fall below the uniform collar. If the hair length falls below the uniform collar, it must be neatly bound. If the bulk of bound hair cannot be worn under the uniform hat, it will be bound at the nape.
3. Discreet, unadorned hair accessories such as barrettes, clips, bands, or netting may be used to maintain a neat hairstyle that allows for issued headgear to be worn correctly.
4. Wigs, extensions, and hair pieces are permitted, but must follow the above guidelines.

B. Facial Hair

1. Facial hair is permitted, for both uniform and non-uniformed employees, but must present a professional appearance and not interfere with an employee's job functions.
2. Employees may wear neatly trimmed goatees, mustaches, sideburns, or beards. Goatees and beards must have clean-shaven edges, and facial hair must be no longer than one-half inch. Unless connected to a beard, sideburns will not extend past mid-ear and must end with a horizontal, clean-shaven line. The neck must remain clean-shaven.
3. Employees whose job function may require them to don a respirator/gas mask should be prepared to shave their facial hair with no notice or short notice.
4. Supervisors may require an employee to shave or trim facial hair with no notice or short notice if the facial hair interferes with officer safety or does not conform to the above guidelines.

C. Fingernails

Fingernails must be kept neat and trimmed to a length that does not interfere with an employee's job functions, to include the handling of issued weapons. While in uniform, nail polish must be clear or a single color. Nail art is prohibited while in uniform.

D. Cosmetics

1. When in uniform, cosmetics/make-up may be worn; however, exaggerated or brightly colored products are prohibited.
2. Cologne and perfume are permitted; however, employees are expected to respect the sensitivities and health of other employees. Employees are expected to reduce the amount used or discontinue use upon notification that a co-worker is experiencing irritation from the scent.

E. Jewelry

1. Jewelry (e.g. bracelets, watches, necklaces, rings, etc.) is permitted so long as it does not interfere with an employee's job function or cause a safety concern. The following restrictions apply:
 - a. When in uniform:
 - 1) Only stud-style earrings may be worn so long as they are a single color (metal or gemstone) and do not extend beyond the earlobe.
 - 2) Necklaces must be concealed under the uniform.
 - 3) Only one ring may be worn, per hand, plus a wedding and/or engagement ring.
 - 4) Only one watch and one bracelet may be worn.
 - b. A maximum one stud ear cartilage piercing is permitted if it is discreet and a single color (metal or gemstone) and not worn while in uniform.



2. The following are prohibited for all on-duty employees, both uniformed and non-uniformed:
 - a. Visible piercings anywhere other than the ears.
 - b. Jewelry/ornamentation that is connected to another piece of jewelry.
 - c. Jewelry/ornamentation affixed directly to or embedded into the skin.
 - d. Noticeable tongue piercings. Clear or flesh-colored tongues piercings are permitted.

NOTE: While performing job functions, jewelry may pose a risk of injury, particularly for sworn employees. The department encourages employees to consider and accept the risk of injury when making their jewelry choices.

F. Body Art

1. The following categories of body art are prohibited, regardless of visibility:
 - a. *Extremist* – Body art affiliated with, depicting, or symbolizing extremist philosophies, organizations, or activities, including those advocating racial, gender, ethnic hatred or intolerance, or illegal discrimination based on race, color, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual or gender orientation, or national origin and/or body art advocating violence or other unlawful means of depriving individual rights under the U.S. Constitution, and Federal or State law.
 - b. *Indecent* – Body art grossly offensive to modesty, decency, propriety, or professionalism.
 - c. *Sexist* – Body art advocating a philosophy that degrades or demeans a person based on gender.
 - d. *Racist* – Body art advocating a philosophy that degrades or demeans a person based on race, ethnicity, or national origin.
2. Visible tattoos, brands or other body art are prohibited in the following areas unless the Chief of Police grants a waiver:
 - a. On the head, face, neck, or scalp (to include ears), except cosmetic body art (e.g. eyeliner, eyebrows, & lips) that is natural in appearance.
 - b. On the hands, fingers, or wrists (below the wrist bone), except ring body art below the finger joint near the base of the finger with no more than one instance of ring body art on each hand.

IV. GUIDELINES FOR ATTIRE

- A. To maintain a professional and office-appropriate appearance, all attire will be neat and clean.
- B. Attire that exposes undergarments, cleavage and/or bare chests, the stomach/midriff, or skin on the legs more than 2" above the knee is prohibited.
- C. Commanders have the authority to establish the appropriate attire for non-uniformed employees, including sworn employees working in plain-clothes assignments. Appropriate attire will be either business attire, business casual attire, or casual attire, in accordance with this policy. Commanders will consider:
 1. The amount of face-to-face interaction with the public.
 2. The importance of professional appearance to complete assignments.
 3. Environmental factors, such as heat and humidity; and
 4. Physical activities (i.e. moving, lifting, dirty conditions, etc.)
- D. If needed, specific attire requirements that go beyond those addressed in this policy may be incorporated into the unit's standard operating procedures.
- E. If employees participate in an on-call schedule, supervisors should establish the appropriate attire (business, business casual, or casual) for an after-hours response, which may or may not be the same as during regular business hours.



- F. When interacting with the public, non-uniformed officers must display their badge prominently on their belt or torso, so it is visible.
- G. Communications Division personnel will refer to [COM-280 Wearing of Uniforms and Grooming Standards](#) for guidelines regarding attire.
- H. Supervisors who approve business casual, or casual daily attire may require any employee to wear their uniform, business attire, or formal business attire for events, such as meetings, interviews or presentations.
- I. Employees conducting presentations or attending meetings with city leader are expected to wear their uniform or formal business attire.
- J. Employees will wear appropriate footwear that coincides with the standards for their attire (i.e. uniform, business, business casual, casual) and are clean and functional for their duties and responsibilities, including the need for maneuverability and safety.

NOTE: The department does not consider athletic sneakers and work style boots appropriate footwear for business or business casual attire, unless specifically required for operational or safety purposes as part of an assigned role or approved medical accommodation.

- K. During inclement weather, non-uniformed personnel may wear weather appropriate clothing (winter/rain boots, coats, cold weather/rain hats, etc.). When interacting with the public, outerwear depicting sports teams or advertisements is prohibited.
- L. Hats, including baseball caps, are prohibited with business and business casual attire. Headwear may be worn for religious, medical or official authorized purposes.

M. Court

The only approved attire for attending court is the issued class B uniform, civilian uniform, or formal business attire. Sworn employees who were in uniform when they made the arrest are encouraged to wear their uniforms to court. Police Aides, Parking Enforcement Officers, and non-sworn employees who are scheduled to testify should wear either their issued uniform or formal business attire. If the Commonwealth Attorney specifies a preference for attire, employees are expected to honor the request.

N. Training

1. Unless otherwise specified, employees attending in-person training will wear either business casual or business attire. This includes training classes hosted by the department, classes hosted by other agencies, and conferences.
2. Instructors are expected to wear their uniform or business attire unless the type of training requires athletic attire.
3. Employees who attend a class that requires athletic attire are expected to change to appropriate attire for their position if they return to work following training.

O. Limited Duty

Employees assigned to limited duty positions (see [ADM-325 Injury On/Off Duty, FMLA](#)), also referred to as light duty, shall not wear their uniform while performing light duty functions. They are required to wear attire consistent with their limited duty assignment unless the supervisor for that assignment approves otherwise.

P. Administrative Uniform

Employees may wear an administrative duty belt in lieu of the standard duty belt in accordance with the parameters outlined in [ADM-520 Issuance and Wearing of Uniforms and Equipment](#).



V. PROCEDURES

A. Authorization of Body Art

1. Authorization of body art is required, as follows:
 - a. Prospective Employees - The Recruiting Unit is responsible for ensuring that prospective employees' body art is acceptable as set out in this policy. Employment packages will include the information on the applicant's body art, as set out in section III.F.
 - b. Body Art (New) - Employees are required to have authorization prior to the addition of any new tattoos/body art to ensure compliance with section III. F. 1.
 - c. Visible Body Art (Existing prior to 08/19/2016 policy publication) – Employees are required to have authorization prior to exposing any visible tattoos/body art.
2. Authorization Process
 - a. The employee will submit the following to their immediate supervisor:
 - 1) Body Art Acknowledgement Form (NNPD [Form #279E](#)).
 - 2) An accurate drawing and/or photograph.
 - 3) The size of the body art.
 - 4) Where on the body it will be located;
 - 5) Whether body art will be visible or will not be visible when wearing pants and a short-sleeved shirt; and
 - 6) The meaning or representation of the body art; if applicable.
 - b. The employee's immediate supervisor will electronically submit the above information through the chain of command to the Support Services Division commander.
 - c. The Chief of Police, or designee, will review the proposed body art and make a final determination, consistent with this policy's standards for prohibited body art. (NNPD [Form #279](#) for prospective employees, NNPD [Form #279E](#) for employees).
 - d. Failure to obtain authorization before receiving a new tattoo/body art or an applicant's failure to disclose an existing tattoo/body art may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
3. The final determination regarding the acceptability of a particular piece of body art will be made by the Chief of Police, or designee. If not approved, employees and prospective employees must sign NNPD [Form #279](#) (prospective employees), or NNPD [Form #279E](#) (employees) acknowledging the policy, and agreeing to cover said body art.
4. Mutilation of body parts, including (but not limited to) tongue bifurcation (splitting), and ear gauging (enlarged holes in the lobe of the ear) is not authorized.

B. Accommodation

1. Religious Beliefs

Reasonable accommodations to this policy for individual employees will be made for the religious beliefs of employees. To request accommodation or exception to this policy, the affected employee may make a written request, through their chain of command, to their bureau commander. Requests are evaluated and approved in consultation with City Human Resources.

2. Medical

- a. Reasonable accommodation to this policy for individual employees will be made for both short and long-term health needs, in consultation with Human Resources and following [ADM-325 Injury On/Off Duty, FMLA](#) and [PAM-1202 Occupational Injury and Disease Policies, Procedures and Guidelines](#). Examples include, but are not limited to, medical conditions that prevent shaving or painful foot conditions.



- b. If a condition is short-term, supervisors may approve a temporary request.
 - c. If a condition is anticipated to be long-term, an employee will submit a written request for accommodation to their bureau commander, through their chain of command, along with a note from their healthcare provider. Requests will be granted in consultation with City Human Resources.
- C. Addressing Non-Compliance
1. Supervisors have the authority to determine whether an employee's attire, including the condition of that attire, is appropriate for the task of the day and whether it conforms with this policy.
 2. Supervisors will apply the guidelines and prohibitions in this policy fairly and in a non-discriminatory manner to all direct reports.
 3. The department's Human Resources liaison will provide guidance to supervisors as needed when addressing violations of this policy.
 4. Violations of this policy that cause a safety concern or violate city policy [201 Workplace Harassment](#) must be addressed immediately. This may include requiring employees to change their clothing.
- D. Clothing with Department Logo
1. Employees may wear the following approved items, purchased with personal funds, with a department approved logo applied by an approved vendor.
 2. Approved items include:
 - a. Shirts: polo/golf shirt, short and long sleeve, cotton/twill button down shirt, short and long sleeve. All shirts must be a solid color.
 - b. Outerwear: Softshell (or similar style), or fleece jacket, consistent in appearance with Class C uniforms.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven R. Drew".

Steven R. Drew
Chief of Police