



Seattle Police Department Policy Manual



9.010 – Employee Appearance Standards

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9.010-POL

It is the policy of the Seattle Police Department that all employees represent the department professionally.

This policy establishes general appearance standards for all department employees while on duty and when off duty acting in the employee's official capacity.

(See manual sections [9.020 – Uniforms](#) and [9.030 – Equipment](#) for specifics on uniform and equipment standards)

1. Employees Will Exhibit a Professional Appearance While Performing Their Official Duties

Employees will wear a uniform or clothing appropriate for a business environment, be well-groomed, and exhibit a professional appearance.

Employees will wear professional business attire or a uniform when appearing in court and will adjust their court attire if a reasonable request is made by the attorney handling the case.

2. Supervisors Will Monitor Compliance with This Policy

3. Unit Commanders May Authorize Exceptions to Appearance Standards for Specific Assignments

Unit commanders may grant exceptions to the standards in this manual section when necessary for specific assignments such as undercover or training activities.

4. Employees Will Style Hair in a Professional Manner

Employees will keep their hair clean, well-groomed, and styled in a manner that does not interfere with their assigned duties.

Sworn employees will style their hair in a manner that does not interfere with uniform headgear or any specialized equipment and will not interfere with the

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employee's safety and effectiveness. Items used to hold hair in place will be of a plain design and a natural color that blends with the hair.

Sworn employees will not wear decorations in their hair such as bows, ribbons, or decorative clips.

Employees may wear hairstyles including, but not limited to, afros, braids, locks, and twists.

5. Employees Will Have a Naturally Occurring Hair Color

Employees will have hair color consistent with a naturally occurring color range and must be professional in appearance.

6. Employees May Have Facial Hair

Employees may have facial hair of a naturally occurring color that is clean, well-groomed, and neatly trimmed with the following conditions:

- Beards will not extend beyond ½ inch from the face.
- Goatees will not extend more than ½ inch below the bottom of the chin and no more than ½ inch from the face.
- Mustaches will follow the natural arch of the mouth and will not exceed the upper border of the lip or extend more than ½ inch horizontally beyond the corners of the mouth, unless attached to a beard.
- Sideburns will not exceed ½ inch below the bottom of the earlobe and should be trimmed with a clean horizontal line along the base, unless attached to a beard.

SWAT, ABS, and Harbor sworn employees are not eligible to have facial hair except for a mustache (in compliance with grooming length requirements mentioned above) due to operational needs and safety risks associated with those units of assignments.

All employees who wear a respirator for their position are required to have an annual FIT testing.

To protect the health and safety of department employees, and to maintain compliance with state and federal workplace safety regulations ([WAC 296-842-18005](#) and [OSHA 1910.134\(g\)\(1\)\(i\)\(A\)](#)), unless an employee has an approved medical or religious exemption, employees cannot have facial hair that comes between the sealing surface of the respirator face piece and the employee's face during their initial FIT testing and for their mandatory annual FIT test.

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Employees with an approved medical or religious exemption must still attend their initial FIT testing and mandatory annual FIT tests, and have their respirators inspected.

7. Sworn Employees Will Be Prepared to Shave in Case of Emergency

Sworn employees with facial hair will have shaving equipment readily available at work should an emergency require immediate removal or trimming of facial hair to don a gas mask during a crowd control event.

Exception: Sworn employees with an accommodation that has been granted are exempt from having shaving equipment readily available.

8. Employees May Have Visible Body Art

Body art is the voluntary modification of the body's appearance for the purpose of creating a design, form, figure, or art. Body art includes, but is not limited to, tattoos, piercing, branding, and scarification.

Employees may have visible body art with the following conditions:

- Employees will not have visible body art that is obscene, offensive, or discriminatory in nature.
- Employees will not have body art on their face that cannot be easily concealed.

9. Employees May Wear Makeup Consistent with a Professional Businesslike Appearance

10. Employees Will Groom Fingernails

Employees' fingernails will not extend beyond the fingertip to the extent that they interfere with the employee's safety and effectiveness.

Employees may wear fingernail polish that is consistent with a professional appearance.

Employees will not have any decorative object affixed to their fingernails.

11. Employees May Wear Limited Jewelry

Employees may wear jewelry outlined in this policy that is professional in appearance, inoffensive, does not interfere with their assigned duties, or pose a safety risk.

Uniformed employees will not wear rings that create a safety hazard or interfere with the use of equipment or hinder their ability to use their hands or fingers.

Sworn employees may wear earrings while on duty.

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- Sworn employees may wear studs or other earrings in the earlobe that fit closely against the ear. The earrings will not extend below or around the earlobe.
- Sworn employees will not wear ear gauges or ear stretching plugs.

Sworn employees will limit other jewelry that may be unsafe.

- Sworn employees may wear watches, bracelets, and necklaces that do not interfere with their safety and effectiveness.
- Sworn employees will not wear any jewelry, accessory, or other decorative hardware anywhere on their face or tongue while on duty or in uniform.

12. Employees May Wear Eyeglasses or Sunglasses

13. Employees May Request Accommodation

The department will consider accommodations to these appearance standards for religious reasons, medical need, and on a case-by-case basis.

Employees may submit a request for accommodation before or after their appearance change through their chain of command to the Human Resources Director.

14. Employees May Appeal a Supervisor's Decision on Appearance

Employees may submit a memo via their chain of command to the Human Resources Director to appeal a supervisor's decision related to the appearance standards in this policy.

While under appeal, the employee does not have to change or alter the appearance that is under appeal; however, the supervisor has the authority to direct the employee to make a reasonable effort to cover the appearance that is being appealed, unless not feasible.

The HR Director will make a final determination.