



Policy Number: 1011 – Personal Appearance Standards

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Approved By: Brandon Gatlin, Interim Chief of Police

1011.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for the personal appearance of members of the Montana State University Billings Police Department (Department).

1011.2 POLICY

Department members shall maintain their personal hygiene and appearance to project a professional image that is appropriate for this Department and for their assignments. Department personal appearance standards are based on safety requirements, appearance conformity and the social norms of the community served, while considering matters important to members of the Department.

1011.3 GROOMING

Unless otherwise stated, and because deviations from these standards may present officer safety issues, the following appearance standards shall apply to all members, except those whose current assignments would deem them not applicable, and where the Chief of Police has granted an exception.

1011.3.1 PERSONAL HYGIENE

All members 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 (i.e. physical disability) 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 the Chief of Police.

1011.3.2 HAIR

Hair shall be clean, neatly trimmed or arranged, and of a natural hair color. Hairstyles with shaved designs in the scalp are prohibited. Hair adornments shall be primarily for the purpose of securing the hair and must present a professional image.

Hairstyles for male Department members must not extend below the top edge of a uniform or dress shirt collar while assuming a normal stance.

When working a field assignment, hairstyles for female Department members must not extend below the bottom edge of a uniform or dress shirt collar while assuming a normal

stance. Longer hair shall be worn up or in a tightly wrapped braid or ponytail that is secured to the head above the bottom edge of the shirt collar.

1011.3.3 MUSTACHES

Mustaches shall not extend below the corners of the mouth or beyond the natural hairline of the upper lip and shall be short and neatly trimmed.

1011.3.4 SIDEBURNS

Sideburns shall not extend below the bottom of the outer ear opening and shall be trimmed and neat.

1011.3.5 FACIAL HAIR

Facial hair (beard and goatee) is authorized, but must be kept neat and clean. Any facial hair deemed not to be neat and clean, as determined by the Chief of Police, or their designee, shall be shaved off, or trimmed to a professional looking appearance.

1011.3.6 FINGERNAILS

Fingernails shall be clean and neatly trimmed to a length that will not present a safety concern. The color of fingernail polish shall present a professional image.

1011.4 APPEARANCE

1011.4.1 JEWELRY

For the purpose of this policy, jewelry refers to rings, earrings, necklaces, bracelets, wristwatches and tie tacks or tie bars. Jewelry shall present a professional image and may not create a safety concern for the Department member or others. Jewelry that depicts racial, sexual, discriminatory, gang-related or obscene language is not allowed. In addition:

1. Necklaces shall not be visible above the shirt collar.
2. Earrings shall be small, worn only in or on the earlobe and only by female Department members. Earrings shall be limited to no more than three earrings per ear.
3. One ring or ring set may be worn on each hand of the Department member. No rings should be of the type that would cut or pose an unreasonable safety risk to the member, or others, during a physical altercation, if the member is assigned to a position where that may occur.
4. One small bracelet, including a bracelet identifying a medical condition, may be worn on one arm.
5. Wristwatches shall be conservative and present a professional image.
6. Tie tacks or tie bars worn with civilian attire shall be conservative and present a professional image.

1011.4.2 TATTOOS

While on-duty or representing this Department in any official capacity, every reasonable effort should be made to conceal tattoos or other body art. At no time while on-duty or representing the Department in any official capacity shall any offensive tattoo or body art be visible. Examples of offensive tattoos include, but are not limited to, those that exhibit or advocate discrimination against sex, race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental disability, medical condition or marital status; those that exhibit gang, supremacist or extremist group affiliation; and those that depict or promote drug use, sexually explicit acts or other obscene material.

Visible tattoos on the face, neck, throat, scalp or hands, except for a small wedding band or ring type tattoo on the ring finger, are prohibited. Any modifications to existing tattoos require approval and documentation just as a new visible tattoo does. Members shall understand that tattoos are relatively permanent and this policy can change to be more or less restrictive at the discretion of the Chief of Police.

1011.4.3 BODY PIERCING OR ALTERATION

Body piercing (other than earlobes), or alteration to any area of the body that is visible while on-duty, or while representing the Montana State University Police Department in any official capacity, that is a deviation from normal anatomical features and not medically required, is prohibited. Such body alteration includes, but is not limited to:

1. Tongue splitting or piercing.
2. 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).
3. Abnormal shaping of the ears, eyes, nose or teeth (i.e. enlarged or stretched out holes in the earlobes).
4. Branding, scarification or burning to create a design or pattern.

1011.4.4 DENTAL ORNAMENTATION

Dental ornamentation that is for decorative purposes, and not medically required, is prohibited while on-duty or while representing the Department in any official capacity. Such ornamentation includes, but is not limited to:

1. Objects that are bonded to front teeth.
2. Gold, platinum or other veneers or caps used for decorative purposes.
3. Orthodontic appliances that are colored for decorative purposes.

1011.4.5 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, that are not medically required, are prohibited while on-duty or while representing the Department in any official capacity.

1011.4.6 COSMETICS AND FRAGRANCES

Cosmetics shall be conservative and present a professional image. Use of cologne, perfume, aftershave lotion, and other items used for body fragrance, shall be kept to a minimum.

1011.4.7 UNDERGARMENTS

Proper undergarments shall be worn as necessary for reasons of hygiene and general appearance standards.

1011.5 RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION

The religious beliefs and needs of Department members should be reasonably accommodated. Requests for religious accommodation should generally be granted, unless there is a compelling security or safety reason, and denying the request is the least restrictive means available to ensure security or safety. Requests for religious accommodations should be forwarded to the Chief of Police.