

Personal Appearance Standards

1023.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for the personal appearance of members of the Havre de Grace Police Department.

Requirements for department uniforms and civilian attire are addressed in the Uniforms and Civilian Attire Policy.

1023.2 POLICY

Havre de Grace Police 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 primarily based on safety requirements, appearance conformity, and the social norms of the community served, while considering matters important to members of the Department.

1023.3 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.

1023.3.1 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 (e.g., race, 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.

1023.3.2 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.

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1023.3.3 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.

1023.3.4 SIDEBURNS

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

1023.3.5 FACIAL HAIR

The grooming standards of the Havre de Grace Police Department allow for neatly groomed and maintained mustaches, goatees and beards for all employees. This means:

- Sworn officer's beards should be uniform in length, with no portion of the beard noticeably longer than the rest. In addition, sworn officer's facial hair must be kept at a neat, acceptable length, that is conservative in appearance. Facial hair should cover below the jaw horizontally but end before downward curve of the neck at a clean shave line. Facial hair on the cheeks will be shaved on or above the cheekbone.
- Beards or goatees must be a natural color and neatly trimmed – no patterns or designs.
- Beards and goatees must be worn with a mustache.
- No braids, bows or other accessories are allowed in facial hair.
- Regardless of beard style or length, sworn employees wearing beards must be able to pass a gas mask fit test and may be required to shave in preparation for an operational need to wear a gas mask. Members must adhere to Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidelines.
- Sworn employees also must have the necessary equipment to trim their beards available at all times.
- Claiming constant growth to avoid regular shaving is not permitted.
- Sworn members working light duty assignments will be required to adhere to the policy.
- Cadets and Recruits: Facial hair other than an authorized mustache is not permitted.

Our supervisors play an essential role in ensuring compliance with the policy. They will ensure that officers conform to the approved styles of facial hair and retain final approval and judgment on whether facial hair is acceptable in appearance.

1023.3.6 FINGERNAILS

Fingernails shall be clean and neatly trimmed to a length that will not present a safety concern or hamper the ability to perform essential functions. The color of fingernail polish shall present a professional image. Officers while in uniform may only wear clear fingernail polish.

1023.4 APPEARANCE

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1023.4.1 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.

- (a) Necklaces shall not be visible above the shirt collar.
- (b) Earrings shall be small and worn only in or on the earlobe.
- (c) 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.
- (d) One small bracelet, including a bracelet identifying a medical condition, may be worn on one arm.
- (e) Wristwatches shall be conservative and present a professional image.
- (f) Tie tacks or tie bars worn with civilian attire shall be conservative and present a professional image.

1023.4.2 TATTOOS

While on-duty or representing the Havre de Grace Police Department in any official capacity, members should make every reasonable effort to conceal tattoos or other body art. Visible tattoos are permitted as long as they are not on the hands, face, head or neck and are not offensive, indecent, extremist, racist or sexist. Exception is one band tattoo on the finger. At no time while the member is 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; those that exhibit gang, supremacist, or extremist group affiliation; and those that depict or promote drug use, sexually explicit acts, or other obscene material.

1023.4.3 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 Havre de Grace Police Department in any official capacity, that is a deviation from normal anatomical features, and that is not medically required, is prohibited. 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.

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1023.4.4 DENTAL ORNAMENTATION

Dental ornamentation that is for decorative purposes and that is not medically required is prohibited while on-duty or while representing the Havre de Grace 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.

1023.4.5 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 and that are not medically required are prohibited while on-duty or while representing the Havre de Grace Police Department in any official capacity.

1023.4.6 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.

1023.4.7 UNDERGARMENTS

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

1023.5 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. The Chief of Police should be advised any time a request for religious accommodation is denied.

Those who request to wear headscarves or simple head coverings, or certain hairstyles or facial hair for religious reasons should generally be accommodated absent unusual circumstances.

1023.6 EXEMPTIONS

Members who seek cultural (e.g., traits associated with race such as hair texture, afro hairstyles, protective hairstyles) or other exemptions to this policy that are protected by law should generally be accommodated (Md. Code SG § 20-101). A member with an exemption may be ineligible for an assignment if the individual accommodation presents a security or safety risk. The Chief of Police should be advised any time a request for such an accommodation is denied or when a member with a cultural or other exemption is denied an assignment based on a security or safety risk.