

Personal Appearance

Table of Contents

Policy Statement	2
Persons Affected	2
Directives Affected.....	2
All Employees and Volunteers	2
Body Alterations.....	2
Hair.....	3
Tattoos	3
Uniformed Members	3
Fingernails	3
Hair - Facial.....	3
Hair - Head	4
Hair - Sideburns.....	4
Jewelry and Accessories.....	4

Policy Statement

Sheriff's Office employees and volunteers, when on duty or acting under the color of their employment, are visible representatives of the Whatcom County Sheriff's Office, Whatcom County government and the criminal justice and emergency management professions. As such, the Sheriff's Office must establish guidelines to ensure employees and volunteers maintain standards of personal appearance that do not compromise public confidence in or respect for our missions.

The sheriff may consider deviations from this policy for bona fide reasons on a case-by-case basis. The sheriff retains final approval authority over any questionable personal appearance practice covered by this policy. Employees seeking an exception must submit their request for accommodation to the Sheriff in writing.

Persons Affected

This policy applies to all Sheriff's Office employees, and uniformed and office volunteers (i.e., does not include volunteers who simply hold emergency worker cards).

The supervisors of the Gang and Drug Task Force and other units whose missions necessitate that members alter their appearance may authorize deviations from this policy during the course of an employee's assignment to those units.

See also the [Uniforms](#) and Dress Code policy.

Directives Affected

Rules and Regulations Manual Section 13.30 - canceled

All Employees and Volunteers

The following guidelines apply to all employees, and uniformed and office volunteers, hereafter referred to as *members*, when on duty or representing the Sheriff's Office. Members are cautioned to avoid making unalterable changes to their personal appearance during off-duty times that will be unacceptable upon their return to work.

Body Alterations

Visible alterations to any area of the body that are deviations from normal anatomical features and are not medically necessary are prohibited. Such body alterations include but are not limited to:

- Abnormal shaping of the ears, eyes, lips or nose (including the abnormal stretching of a body opening, also known as gauging)
- Addition of anything to the teeth for the purpose of ornamentation, including but not limited to jewels, veneers and initials
- Branding or scarification
- Facial piercing

- Tongue piercing or splitting
- Transdermal implantations other than hair replacement

The normal piercing of ears for the wearing of earrings when not in uniform is permitted.

Hair

Hair and hairstyles:

- Shall not interfere with the proper wearing of headgear or protective masks.
- Shall not have shaved portions of the scalp where corresponding areas are not, nor have designs or ornaments cut, braided or parted into them (e.g., words or designs shaved into the hair).
- Shall not be dyed using unnatural hair colors (e.g., purple).

Hair accessories shall be limited in number to those necessary to keep the hair of female members up or braided and shall be consistent with hair color.

Tattoos

Tattoos on the head, neck and hands are prohibited, except for tattoos that replace rings authorized for wear in the [Jewelry and Accessories](#) section.

At no time shall any offensive tattoo or body art be visible. Examples of offensive tattoos include but are not limited to those depicting racial, sexual, discriminatory or gang-related themes, or that contain obscene language.

Uniformed Members

The following guidelines apply to members when wearing Sheriff's Office uniforms.

Fingernails

Members shall keep their nails trimmed so that they do not extend beyond the tips of the fingers.

Hair - Facial

A short and neatly trimmed mustache or goatee may be worn.

- Mustaches shall not extend below the corners of the mouth or beyond the natural hairline of the upper lip.
- A goatee for these purposes is defined as one that connects the mustache to the hair on the chin.

A beard that is full and neatly trimmed may be worn.

- Beard hair must be no longer than 1/2" in length and must be worn with a mustache.
- The top of the beard should not cover the upper part of the cheek.
- The bottom of the beard should not go below the Adam's apple following the jaw line.
- The beard must allow for an air tight gas mask seal during fit testing and actual use.
- New beards must to be grown during periods of leave from work until they appear full.

Hair - Head

Male employees shall keep their hair trimmed so that it does not extend below the top edge of a normal shirt collar when standing.

Female employees shall:

- (a) Keep their hair trimmed so that it is no longer than the horizontal level of the bottom of the shoulder patch when standing, or
- (b) Wear their hair up, or
- (c) Wear their hair in a tightly-wrapped braid or pony tail.

Hair - Sideburns

Sideburns must be neatly trimmed and shall not extend below the bottom of the outer ear opening (i.e., the top of the earlobe).

Jewelry and Accessories

Members are limited to the following *visible* jewelry and accessories:

- One ring on each hand
- One watch
- Medical bracelets

Members may wear bracelets supporting charitable or honorable causes (e.g., cancer survivors) for a finite period of time after obtaining approval from a command staff member.