

Personal Appearance Standards

1312.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for the personal appearance of members of the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office. Requirements for office uniforms and civilian attire are addressed in the Uniforms and Civilian Attire Policy.

1312.2 POLICY

Montgomery County Sheriff's Office members shall maintain their personal hygiene and appearance to project a professional image that is appropriate for this office and for their assignments. Office 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 Office.

1312.3 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 Sheriff has granted an exception.

1312.3.1 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. 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 Sheriff.

1312.3.2 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 office members must not extend below the top edge of a uniform or dress shirt collar while assuming a normal stance.

When working assignments, hairstyles for female office members must not extend below their upper shoulders 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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1312.3.3 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.

1312.3.4 SIDEBURNS

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

1312.3.5 FACIAL HAIR

Facial hair, other than sideburns, mustaches and eyebrows, is prohibited, unless authorized by the Sheriff or the authorized designee.

1312.3.6 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.

1312.4 APPEARANCE

1312.4.1 JEWELRY

For the purpose of this policy, jewelry refers to but is not limited to 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 office member or others. Jewelry that depicts racial, sexual, discriminatory, gang-related, unsettling or obscene language is not allowed. See the Uniforms and Civilian Attire Policy for jewelry specifications that apply while wearing the office uniform.

- (a) Necklaces shall not be visible above the shirt collar.
- (b) Earrings shall be small, worn only in or on the earlobe and only by female office members. Earrings shall be limited to no more than one earring per ear.
- (c) One ring or ring set may be worn on each hand of the office 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.

1312.4.2 TATTOOS

While on-duty or representing the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office in any official capacity, members shall not display any offensive tattoo or body. Examples of offensive tattoos include, but are not limited to, those that exhibit or advocate

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discrimination against sex, race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental disability or medical condition, marital status, gang, supremacist or extremist group affiliation, drug use, sexually explicit acts or other obscene material.

1312.4.3 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 Montgomery County Sheriff's Office 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) Abnormal shaping of the ears, eyes, nose or teeth (i.e., enlarged or stretched out holes in the earlobes).
- (c) Branding, scarification or burning to create a design or pattern.

1312.4.4 DENTAL ORNAMENTATION

Dental ornamentation that is for decorative purposes and that is not medically required is prohibited while on-duty or while representing the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office 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.

1312.4.5 GLASSES AND SUNGLASSES

Eyeglasses and sunglasses shall be conservative and present a professional image.

1312.4.6 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.

1312.4.7 UNDERGARMENTS

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

1312.5 RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION

The religious beliefs and needs of office 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.

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. The request must be in writing.