

**HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS  
POLICY & PROCEDURE**

	<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Administration
	<b>P &amp; P #:</b>	A-027
	<b>TITLE:</b>	Dress and Grooming Standards for Non-Uniformed Employees, and Approved Visitors
	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b>	December 17, 2019
	<b>REVIEWED BY:</b>	<i>Andrea King Wessels</i> Andrea King-Wessels
	<b>AUTHORITY:</b>	<i>Jack Kavanagh</i> Jack Kavanagh, Director

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this policy and procedure is to provide the non-uniform employees of the Howard County Department of Corrections (HCDC) with dress and grooming standards for a professional and identifiable appearance that will promote a positive working environment, limit distractions caused by outrageous, provocative, or inappropriate dress, grooming, or personal hygiene, and assist in ensuring staff safety while working.

**POLICY:**

**Statement of Purpose:** Employees and staff at all levels and job positions within the Howard County Department of Corrections are representatives of the organization and, therefore, their dress, grooming, and personal hygiene affect both the public’s impression of the organization and internal morale.

**General Policy:** It is the policy of the HCDC that all employees will present a professional, businesslike image while on the job. It is the policy of the HCDC that each employee’s dress, grooming, and personal hygiene be appropriate to the work situation and creates a favorable role model and public image.

**REFERENCES:** HCDC Policies A-007 Standards of Conduct; and H-708 Inmate/Detainee Visiting.

**DEFINITIONS:**

**Civilian Attire Institutional Staff:** Also referred to as non-uniformed institutional staff. Staff assigned to work at (HCDC) who are not issued a uniform by (HCDC) and are required to provide their own clothing for on-the job wearing apparel.

**Employee:** Any person employed full-time, part-time, or under temporary appointment by the Howard County Department of Corrections.

**Staff:** Howard County Department of Corrections employees (temporary and permanent), contractors, volunteers, on-site vendors, and persons from other agencies, organizations, and businesses whose work is performed primarily on or within Howard County Department of Corrections.

**Visitor** – Any person specifically authorized by the Director or designee which may include an individual that may visit any time other than procedurally authorized or special conditions of visits or relating to a job that requires special education, training, or skill which is done or given by a person who works in a particular profession, one who is characterized by or conforming to the technical or ethical standards of a profession exhibiting a courteous, conscientious, and generally businesslike manner in the workplace.

## **PROCEDURES:**

### **I. General Standards**

A. Adherence to this policy is the individual employee/staff's responsibility.

1. If unsure about the correct dress and grooming standards for his/her job, the individual is expected to consult with his/her supervisor.
2. Any person who does not meet the standard of this policy will be required to take corrective action, which may include leaving the premises to return home to change clothes and become in compliance with this policy.

### **II. Appearance**

A. Appearance of Work Attire.

1. Work attire shall be neat, clean, and a compliment to the employee/staff and the department.
2. All employees/staff shall keep their clothing clean and well maintained at all times.
3. Identification badges shall be worn and visible at all times.

### **III. Traditional Business Dress Standard**

Traditional business dress is the standard dress for court appearance, inter-agency meetings, cabinet meetings, receptions, tours, public meeting, legislative committee meetings, and employee recognition ceremonies throughout the year where the employee is representing the agency.

A. Male Employees: The traditional business dress standard for male employees shall be slacks, dress shirt, and tie, with a sport jacket or suit coat also preferred.

1. Turtlenecks or mock turtlenecks under a sport jacket or suit coat with dress slacks may be worn in lieu of a dress suit and tie, except when appearing at Legislative Committee meetings.

B. Female Employees: The traditional business dress standard for female employees shall be dresses, skirts and blouses, dress slacks and blouses, or pants suits that are

conservative in design and not revealing. Pullover or cardigan style sweaters and vests are an acceptable alternative to jacket or suit.

1. Casual dresses and skirts, and skirts that are split at or below the knee are acceptable, or skirts at a length at which you can sit comfortably in public are acceptable.
2. As a general rule, dresses and skirts that are above knee length and that do not allow bending are not appropriate. Short, tight skirts that ride halfway up the thigh are inappropriate for work. Mini-skirts, skorts, sun dresses, beach dresses, bathing suit cover-ups, and spaghetti-strap dresses are inappropriate. Tops that are see-through, extremely low cut (reveal cleavage) are inappropriate. Sleeveless tops that come to the end of the shoulder are appropriate.

#### IV. Business Casual Dress Standard

Business casual removes the traditional business dress requirements for such things as dress shirt, tie and sports jacket or suit coat.

- A. All casual clothing is not suitable for the office these guidelines will help you determine what is appropriate to wear to work. Clothing that works well for the beach, yard work, dance clubs, exercise sessions, and sports contests may not be appropriate for a professional, casual appearance at work.
- B. Suggestive attire (such as mini-skirts, low-cut tops, or sleeveless tops without a jacket or sweater covering them that otherwise do not come to the end of the shoulder). Any clothing that may reveal too much cleavage, back, chest, stomach or underwear is not appropriate for a place of business. Clothing should be pressed and not wrinkled. Torn, dirty, or frayed clothing is unacceptable.

#### V. Dress Down Day

- A. Fridays have been formally designated by the Department as a dress down day. Certain other days may occasionally be declared as dress down days. On these days, jeans, sneakers and a more casual approach to dressing, although never potentially offensive to others, are allowed.
- B. While participating in physically active type training, staff may wear sweat suits or utility type clothing, and shall maintain a professional appearance. Staff are otherwise subject to the same dress codes, conduct codes and standards as when on regular duty.
- C. When wearing sweat suits/utility clothing for training, staff shall have general clothing, on premises, in case they are required for duty after training

#### VI. Attire of Official Duties Away from Office.

- A. Employees/staff assigned to temporary in-service, or specialty training may be

permitted to wear class appropriate business casual or other attire, when indicated by the rules of that training.

- B. During travel to conferences, training, etc., employees/staff may be more casually dressed.
- C. After normal duty hours, employees/staff who return to the work site should remember that they represent the department in view of the inmate/detainee and the public and shall be expected to dress as they would for normal duty hours or wear clothing that is otherwise in compliance with this policy.

## VII. Institution-Specific Logo

The Director of HCDC may authorize designs for staff/employee on-duty wear that incorporate HCDC insignia or emblems and which may be made available to employees for self-purchase. Only items with a design specifically approved by the Director may be worn.

- A. Staff/employee shall not wear clothing with embroidered HCDC insignia or emblem for the following purposes/locations/times.
  - 1. HCDC insignia or emblems may not be worn for any purpose that will bring discredit to the department, including while gambling or purchasing and drinking alcohol;
  - 2. HCDC insignia or emblems may not be worn into any establishment that will bring discredit to the department, including but not limited to such places as liquor stores, bars, taverns, lounges, adult entertainment centers, or adult book stores;
  - 3. HCDC insignia or emblems may not be worn when participating in any activities that promote a candidate for public office or participating in large public gatherings for entertainment purposes.
- B. When members of the public observe a HCDC employee in clothing with the HCDC insignia or emblems within the community they may consider the employee to be acting in an official capacity and on the county payroll. Therefore, when in doubt as to the propriety of wearing these clothing items to any destination while off-duty, employees should consider changing to other civilian clothing before arriving at the location.

## VIII. Cologne, Perfume and Cologne

Colognes and perfumes, if worn, shall be used in moderation. As a reminder, some employees may be allergic to the chemicals in perfumes and makeup, so wear these

## IX. Body Odor/Poor Personal Hygiene

Offensive body odor and poor personal hygiene is not professionally acceptable.

X. Tattoos

Tattoos advocating or depicting any form of negative religious, racial, ethnic or gender bias; tattoos depicting illicit drugs or drug paraphernalia; tattoos that are perceived by staff or inmates/detainees as being affiliated with any security threat group or street gang; and tattoos containing nudity or vulgar wording must be concealed.

XI. Body Piercings

A. Visible body piercing jewelry shall be limited to earrings.

1. For safety reasons, non-uniformed employees/staff assigned to work inside the facility and staff who work directly with offenders in the community shall be limited to earrings that are business appropriate. (Employees with additional ear piercings may wear a small stud earring in each, recognizing that a professional appearance must be maintained.)
2. Care should be taken when certified staff who work alongside uniform staff or on posts, in wearing non-dangling earrings and long chains or necklaces that could sustain damage or may cause injury should they be caught in something or grabbed.
3. Generally, facial jewelry, such as rings, posts, studs or other foreign material worn in the eyebrow, nose, lip, tongue, and/or other exposed body part, is not professionally appropriate and must not be worn while on-duty. However, a diminutive stud that does not distract may be approved.
4. Torso body piercings, with visible jewelry or jewelry that can be seen through or under clothing, may not be worn while on duty.

XII. Fingernails

Employees shall keep fingernails clean and neatly trimmed so they do not interfere with performance of their duties, detract from a professional image or present a safety hazard. Female employees/staff may wear nail polish that does not detract from a professional appearance.

XIII. Make Up

Make up, when worn by employee/staff, shall be worn in a manner that does not provoke undue personal attention to the person.

XIV. Hair Style Standards

There will be hair style standards for employees, contracted staff, visitors, and volunteers.

- A. While on duty, all personnel shall wear hair styles that do not provoke undue personal attention.

- B. Hair styles are expected to be in good taste. Bizarre or extreme hair styles are prohibited for on-duty wear or those who may meet the public and/or inmates/detainees.
- C. Hair color shall be restricted to natural and traditional colors and shades, appropriate to the position. Unnatural hair colors, such as blue, pink, purple, etc., will not be permitted. Nothing in this policy will restrict an employee/staff's ability to tastefully change their natural hair color, cover discoloration, or streak their hair in accordance with socially acceptable standards.
- D. When all departmental employees are assigned along with uniform staff or on posts working in direct contact with inmates/detainees will either wear their hair to extend no further than the bottom of the collar or will clip their hair not to extend below the top of the collar while on-duty.
  - 1. Ponytail or braided hair styles are permitted for institutional staff who are working in direct daily contact with inmates/detainees only if the hair does not touch below the top of the collar.
  - 2. The wearing of hair accessories such as clips, barrettes, combs, head bands shall be kept to a minimum and/or shall be of a color and design to compliment rather than detract from the person's appearance.
- E. Employees/staff are urged to keep in mind that hair length can offer an advantage to an assailant.
- F. Hairpieces or wigs that may conform to grooming standards may be worn as a means of compliance or to counter baldness. If worn on duty shall meet the requirements of hair standards set forth in this directive and present a natural appearance and shall not interfere with the proper performance of duty or present a safety hazard. When a wig is to be worn inside the secured area of the facility, advance supervisory notification is required. In the event the hairpiece is lost or stolen, security will be notified immediately.

XV. Facial Hair

- A. Facial hair is generally permitted, unless it becomes a sanitation or safety concern (e.g., a violation of OSHA requirements).
  - 1. Sideburns, mustaches and beards must be kept clean at all times and must be neatly trimmed.
  - 2. Regardless of assignment, staff must be cognizant that lengthy facial hair can offer an advantage to an assailant and may present a problem.
  - 3. Bizarre, extreme and/or unkept facial hair styles are prohibited.

XVI. Footwear

Shoes must provide safe, secure footing, and offer protection against any hazards present in the work site and appropriate with suitable professional/business attire. Employees/staff who engage in physical fitness activities during a scheduled break may wear athletic shoes during exercise, when leaving to and returning from an exercise period, and for occasional appropriate casual dress days as authorized within this policy.

XVII. Ensuring Compliance with Policy

Supervisors and department heads shall be responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy.

XVIII. Directors Prerogative

The Director has the authority to revise/change a policy or post order as needed to meet the operational demands of the Department. As the changes are initiated, they may be communicated by an email, memoranda or in rare circumstances verbal due to unforeseen situations.

**ATTACHMENTS:** None

**RESCISSIONS:** HCDC Policy A-027 Staff Grooming and Dress Standards effective December 18, 2018, December 13, 2017.