

# Personal Appearance Standards

## 1022.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for the personal appearance of members of the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office.

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

## 1022.2 POLICY

St. Mary's 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.

## 1022.3 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.

### 1022.3.1 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 Sheriff.

### 1022.3.2 HAIR

- (a) All uniformed male employees will wear their hair neatly trimmed and tapered to the sides of the head and to the back of the neck. Hair dye, if used, will be professional in appearance and not of an unnatural color.
- (b) All uniformed female employees will wear their hair so it is neatly and inconspicuously fastened or secured in either a bun, single ponytail, or a single braid. Multiple locs, braids, twists or cornrows may come together in one braid or a single ponytail.
  - 1. Braids and single ponytails must be worn down the center of the back in all uniforms, but the length may not extend past the bottom of the shoulder blades while at the position of attention.
  - 2. A ponytail or braid should not be worn in a way that hinders an officer's performance or presents a safety risk during tactical or physical training.

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3. All uniformed female employees with short to medium hair (defined as hair length that does not extend beyond the upper edge of the collar in all uniforms), may allow hair to fall naturally in uniform, and is not required to be secured.
4. No ribbons or ornaments will be worn in the hair except for neat inconspicuous bobby pins or conservative barrettes.
5. Hair dye, if used, will be professional in appearance and not of an unnatural color.
6. Hair in front will be groomed so that it does not fall below the band of properly worn uniform headgear.
7. Wigs are permitted provided they meet the standards regarding length and style.

### 1022.3.3 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. "Handlebar" mustaches are prohibited.

### 1022.3.4 SIDEBURNS

Sideburns will be neatly trimmed and not extend below the mid-point of the tragus of the ear. The tragus is identified as the prominence in front of the external opening of the ear.

### 1022.3.5 FACIAL HAIR

Beards must be worn in conjunction with a connecting mustache and must not exceed 1/4" in length. The appearance of all facial hair must be shaped and trimmed above the neckline. The beard must connect with sideburns.

Employees with facial hair must have a shaving kit immediately available in the event of a duty related incident where a breathing apparatus would be used (e.g., civil disturbance, barricade, etc.) and proper seal cannot be obtained.

Personnel with facial hair must shave to accommodate gas mask fit testing if the gas mask cannot obtain a proper seal.

### 1022.3.6 FINGERNAILS

Fingernails may be polished provided the polish is one color, the same color on all nails, there are no adornments, and the nails are kept short.

## **1022.4 APPEARANCE**

### 1022.4.1 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 office 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.

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- (b) Earrings shall be small and worn only in or on the earlobe and only by female office members. Earrings shall be limited to no more than two earrings 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.

#### 1022.4.2 TATTOOS

At no time will a member while on-duty or representing the Office in any official capacity, have any visible offensive tattoo or body art. 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, symbols/verbiage representing anti-government views, or other obscene material. Neck and face tattoos are prohibited. Every employee is accountable for the meaning and public perception of the body art they elect to place on their body.

#### 1022.4.3 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 St. Mary's 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) 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.
- (e) Nose, eyebrow, and ear cartilage piercings

#### 1022.4.4 DENTAL ORNAMENTATION

Dental ornamentation that is for decorative purposes and that is not medically required is prohibited while on-duty or while representing the St. Mary's 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.

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- (c) Orthodontic appliances that are colored for decorative purposes.

### **1022.4.5 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 St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office in any official capacity.

### **1022.4.6 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.

### **1022.5 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. All requests for religious accommodation will be routed through Blue Team with a detail to the Sheriff.

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.

### **1022.6 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. All requests for exemptions will be routed through Blue Team with a detail to the Sheriff.