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| **Uniforms and Grooming** | Related Policies: | |
| *This policy is for internal use only and does not enlarge an employee’s civil liability in any way. The policy should not be construed as creating a higher duty of care, in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party civil claims against employees. A violation of this policy, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department for non-judicial administrative action in accordance with the laws governing employee discipline.* | | |
| Applicable KY Statutes: | | |
| OSHA: | | |
| NFPA Standard: 1500, 1581, 1975 | | |
| Date Implemented: | | Review Date: |

1. **Policy:** It is the policy of the fire department to require that all personnel present a uniform, competent, and professional appearance at any time while on duty or otherwise in uniform. It is further the policy of the fire department that all personnel shall dress and groom themselves in such a way as to minimize the risk injury to themselves and others, while remaining compliant with all laws, ordinances, and regulations.
2. **Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to establish a standardized policy for the wearing of fire department uniforms and the grooming of personnel.
3. **Uniforms**
   1. **General Rules**
      1. Members of the department of all ranks shall provide themselves with the uniforms and equipment of the approved design for the proper seasons and occasions prescribed in this policy.
      2. No uniform, insignia, button, badge, patch, pin or other item other than that prescribed by regulation shall be worn by any member of the fire department unless authorized by the Fire Chief.
      3. Members shall not wear uniforms, or any part of a uniform, that are in a worn, torn, damaged, faded, or soiled condition.
      4. Uniforms or parts of uniforms shall be proper fitting, neat, clean, well pressed and buttoned. Shoes, buttons, badges and insignia shall be well polished. The uniform hat shall be worn straight (not tilted) upon the head. When required to be worn, the black four-in-hand necktie shall not be tucked into the shirt.
      5. All uniform items shall be maintained in presentable condition.
      6. Members shall be held responsible for the condition of their uniforms at all times. Members having uniforms or parts of uniforms that become ill-fitting, soiled or worn, shall immediately repair, replace or clean them without awaiting orders to do so.
      7. The Fire Chief may authorize staff personnel and those with special assignments to wear civilian clothing. Such authorization shall be made in writing.
      8. Except when on official fire department business, members shall not wear uniforms or any part thereof at any place of amusement, entertainment, or other place of public assembly without the approval of the Fire Chief.
      9. Members in uniform shall not smoke in public; upon any street, sidewalk, or thoroughfare; while aboard any apparatus, public transportation, or in a vehicle; or when on a paid detail.
      10. Members in uniform shall not enter any place where intoxicating liquors or beverages are manufactured, sold or served, except while in the official discharge of duties.
      11. Members shall not drink intoxicating liquors or beverages while in uniform, nor shall a member be intoxicated or impaired while in uniform.
      12. Members shall not sell, borrow, loan or give away any fire department badge, insignia, patch, uniform or part of uniform, or other Department equipment.
      13. Members shall promptly report the loss of away any fire department badge, insignia, patch, uniform or part of uniform, or other Department equipment to the officer in command of their unit. Members losing any of the items mentioned in this paragraph through negligence shall be charged for replacement of the same.
      14. The proper seasonal Dress Uniform shall be available in company quarters at all times when members are on duty.
      15. Members required or permitted to appear before the Fire Chief shall appear on such visitation in the proper seasonal Dress Uniform.
      16. During the period from May 1st to October 1st the Summer Dress and Summer Station Uniform shall be worn, unless otherwise ordered by the Fire Chief.
      17. Members participating in any Fire Department function such as parades, funerals, details, etc., shall wear the proper seasonal Dress Uniform, unless otherwise ordered by the Fire Chief.
      18. The wearing of jewelry, piercings, dental ornamentation, contact lenses that alter the appearance of one’s eyes, or similar adornments of any kind is prohibited whenever a member is in Station or Dress Uniform, subject to the following:
          1. Necklaces may be worn provided they are concealed under the uniform.
          2. The wearing of rings is not permitted, except for the wearing of single ring such as a wedding band. However, even the wearing of a wedding band is strongly discouraged for safety reasons
          3. No earrings or piercings of visible body parts are permitted. No articles shall be attached to or through the ear, nose, tongue, lip, eyebrow, or any other visible body part.
          4. The wearing of bracelets is not permitted.
          5. The wearing of a wristwatch is permitted, and shall not be considered jewelry within the meaning of this section.
      19. Only shoes meeting department regulation shall be worn while in either Station or Dress Uniform. Exceptions to this policy will only be granted by the Chief of Department.
      20. While on duty, members shall not wear any clothing that has an tendency to ignite or melt at low temperatures, such as polyesters, nylon, and synthetic fabrics. This includes clothing that is worn under turnout gear and even articles worn under station uniforms.  
            
          **Editor’s Note**: NFPA 1500, Ch. 7.1.5 requires the inclusion of the following for fire department that require personnel to wear uniforms:  
            
          Station/work uniforms issued by the department shall meet the requirements of NFPA 1975, *Standard on Station/Work Uniforms for Fire and Emergency Services*.  
            
          NFPA 1500, Ch 7.1.7 requires that the fire department provide for the cleaning of protective clothing and station/work uniforms, either by
          1. a cleaning service that is familiar with the proper procedures and equipped to handle contaminated clothing or
          2. by a fire department facility that is equipped to handle contaminated clothing. Where such cleaning is conducted in fire stations, the fire department shall provide at least one washing machine for this purpose in the designated cleaning area specified in NFPA 1581, *Standard on Fire Department Infection Control Program*.
   2. **Dress Uniform**
      1. Chief Officers
         1. Winter Dress Uniform: Double breasted sack coat, Navy blue in color, with gold plated regulation buttons, and trousers of same material; white long sleeve dress shirt with epaulettes and badge holder; black four-in-hand necktie; black belt; plain black shoes and regulation Fire Department white uniform hat with gold braid strap. The prescribed insignia of rank shall be worn on coat collar, shirt collar, coat sleeves and hat, and the regulation badge shall be worn on the left outside coat breast.
         2. The dress uniform coat of the fire chief shall have six rows of buttons
         3. The dress uniform coat of all other chiefs officers shall have five rows of buttons
         4. Summer Dress Uniform: Single breasted coat, black in color, with gold plated regulation buttons, and trousers of light weight material, black in color; white short sleeve dress shirt with epaulettes and badge holder; black four-in-hand necktie; black belt; plain black shoes and regulation Fire Department white uniform hat with gold braid strap. The prescribed insignia of rank shall be worn on coat collar, shirt collar, coat sleeves and hat, and the regulation badge shall be worn on the left outside coat breast.
      2. Captains and Lieutenants:
         1. Winter Dress Uniforms: The same as for Chief Officers with the exception that buttons and cap braid strap shall be silver in color.
         2. Summer Dress Uniforms: Trousers of approved material, Navy blue in color; white short sleeve dress shirt with epaulettes and badge holder; black four-in-hand necktie; black belt; plain black shoes and regulation Fire Department white uniform hat with silver strap.
      3. Firefighters:
         1. Winter Dress Uniforms: Single breasted sack coat, Navy blue in color, with silver regulation buttons, and trousers of same material; white long sleeve dress shirt with epaulettes and badge holder; black four-in-hand necktie; black belt; plain black shoes and regulation Fire Department blue uniform hat with black braid strap. The prescribed insignia shall be worn on the uniform hat, and the regulation badge shall be worn on the left outside coat breast.
         2. Summer Dress Uniforms: Trousers of approved material, Navy blue in color; white short sleeve dress shirt with epaulettes and badge holder; black four-in-hand necktie; black belt; plain black shoes and regulation Fire Department blue uniform hat with black braid strap.
   3. **Station Uniform**
      1. Chief Officers
         1. Chief officers shall wear the prescribed seasonal Dress Uniform at all times. However, chiefs officers assigned to operations may wear a navy blue station uniform jacket in place of the dress uniform jacket, and upon completion of the nightly district inspection, may dispense with the Dress Uniform shirt.
      2. Captains and Lieutenants
         1. Winter Station Uniform: NFPA compliant long sleeve shirt and trousers, as issued by the Department; black belt; and plain black shoes. The prescribed insignia of rank shall be worn on the shirt collar.
         2. Summer Station Uniform: NFPA compliant short sleeve shirt and trousers, as issued by the Department; black belt; and plain black shoes. The prescribed insignia of rank shall be worn on the shirt collar.
      3. Firefighters
         1. Winter and Summer Station Uniform: Same as for Captains and Lieutenants, however, no insignia of rank shall be worn on collar.
      4. A Navy blue fire department baseball cap may be worn in conjunction with the Station Uniform. Caps with other orientations (sports teams, other fire departments, etc.) are not permitted.
      5. Navy blue sweatshirts or job sweat which are Fire Department oriented or plain may be worn in conjunction with the Station Uniform. Sweatshirts with other orientations (sports teams or other fire departments) are not permitted. All sweatshirts shall be 100% cotton or F.R. rated material.
      6. Station Uniform shoes and boots must be regulation safety type meeting ANSI Z41 toe impact and compression specifications. They must be plain, smooth black leather, can range from standard height to high tops, and can be secured by velcro straps, zippers, laces or pull-on style. The shoe must be securely fastened while being worn to assure proper ankle support. Shoes/books shall be worn with sock, either plain black, navy blue, or white.
   4. **Insignia of Rank**
      1. Fire Chief
         1. Cap and lapel: A round design of gilt metal with five crossed trumpets in relief, gold in color. The brim of the cap shall have a gold oak leaf braid trimmed in red.
         2. Dress Uniform Sleeve: A 1 3/4 inch wide gold braid band placed 3 1/2 inches from the end and around each Dress Uniform coat sleeve. Within the gold band, there shall be a thin red band. Five small insignia of rank shall be centered on the braid on each outside coat sleeve.
         3. Shirt collar insignia: A round design of gilt metal with five crossed trumpets in relief, gold in color.
      2. Assistant Fire Chief
         1. Cap and lapel: A round design of gilt metal with four crossed trumpets in relief, gold in color. The brim of the cap shall have a gold oak leaf braid.
         2. Dress Uniform Sleeve: A 1 3/4 inch wide gold braid band placed 3 1/2 inches from the end and around each Dress Uniform coat sleeve. Four small insignia of rank shall be centered on the braid on each outside coat sleeve.
         3. Shirt Collar insignia: A round design of gilt metal with four crossed trumpets in relief, gold in color.
      3. Deputy Assistant Chief (Deputy Chief)
         1. Cap and lapel: A round design of gilt metal with three crossed trumpets in relief, gold in color.
         2. Dress Uniform Sleeve: A 1 3/4 inch wide gold braid band placed 3 1/2 inches from the end and around each Dress Uniform coat sleeve. Three small insignia of rank shall be centered on the braid on each outside coat sleeve.
         3. Shirt Collar insignia: A round design of gilt metal with three crossed trumpets in relief, gold in color.
      4. Battalion Chief
         1. Cap & each lapel: A round design of gilt metal with two crossed trumpets in relief, gold in color.
         2. Dress Uniform Sleeve: A 1 3/4 inch wide gold braid band placed 3 1/2 inches from the end and around each Dress Uniform coat sleeve. Two small insignia of rank shall be centered on the braid on each outside coat sleeve.
         3. Shirt Collar insignia: A round design of gilt metal with two crossed trumpets in relief, gold in color.
      5. Captains
         1. Engine Companies - Cap, lapel and shirt rank insignia: A round design of silver with two parallel trumpets, bells facing downward thereon.
         2. Ladder Companies - Cap, lapel and shirt rank insignia: A round design of silver with two upright axes, blades facing each other.
         3. Dress Uniform Sleeve: Two narrow silver braided bands placed parallel 1/4 inch apart and 3 1/2 inches above the end of the Dress Uniform coat sleeve.
      6. Lieutenants
         1. Engine Companies - Cap, lapel and shirt rank insignia: A round design of silver with one trumpet, bell facing downward thereon.
         2. Ladder Companies - Cap, lapel and shirt rank insignia: A round design of silver with one upright axe.
         3. Dress Uniform Sleeve: Two narrow silver braided bands placed parallel 1/4 inch apart and 3 1/2 inches above the end of the Dress Uniform coat sleeve.
4. **Grooming**
   1. **Statement of Policy**
      1. The grooming of individual members of the Fire Department must be consistent with the conditions under which firefighters are employed, and the need to present a uniform, competent, and professional image to the public we serve.  
           
         Our work takes place in highly heated, toxic, poorly illuminated, abnormal, and unsanitary conditions. Smoke inhalation, heat exhaustion, lacerations, burns, and falls are common occurrences to firefighters. Flowing hair is readily ignited, and can catch on saws, equipment, and machinery. Long hair can act as an insulator retaining body heat and raising body temperatures at a time when eliminating body heat through exposed skin surface is highly desirable. Hair of excessive length on the head, and hair on the face of any length increases the risk and/or consequences of these occurrences.  
           
         Reliable research has demonstrated the facial hair as well as long hair can interfere with obtaining a satisfactory SCBA face piece seal. Furthermore, both OSHA and NFPA standards prohibit the use of respirators in IDLH atmospheres by employees with beards and facial hair that interferes with the mask seal.  
           
         The health of the individual firefighter can also compromised when working in unsanitary environments. Exposed hair can become a breeding place for germs. Lacerations on hair covered surfaces are subject to infection in direct proportion to the area and depth of the hair, thereby complicating the injury and extending the recuperation period.  
           
         In addition, the fire department is a para-military organization where uniformity, morale, and esprit de corps play an important role. Extreme appearance can distract from the goal of a uniform professional appearance among personnel, and negatively impact the perception of the entire organization by the public and public officials. Employees are expected at all times to present a professional, competent, and business like image to the public.  
           
         Accordingly, the following standards for personal grooming are established based upon concerns over the safety of the individual member and the role that uniforms and grooming standards play in helping the Department accomplish its mission through enhancing a professional image.
   2. **Personal Hygiene**

* + 1. While on duty or in uniform, all personnel shall be neat and clean. Clothes shall be clean and properly maintained, and uniforms shall be in conformity with Department specifications.
  1. **Facial Hair Standard**
     1. All members shall be clean shaven when reporting for duty, except as hereinafter provided regarding mustaches.
     2. Members shall remain clean shaven throughout their tour of duty, and shall be clean shaven at anytime that either the station uniform or dress uniform is worn.
     3. Mustaches are permitted but must conform to the following:
        1. They must be neatly trimmed
        2. They must not extend beyond 1/2 inch below the corner of the mouth.
        3. The center of the mustache must not extend below any portion of the upper lip.
        4. "Handle Bar" mustaches are permitted so long as they are kept neat, comply with "a" and "b" above, and do not exceed 1 1/2 inches in length.
     4. Beards and goatees are not permitted.
  2. **Hair Standard**
     1. While on duty or at any time while in station or dress uniform, hair should be clean, combed, and neatly trimmed or arranged. Shaggy, unkempt hair is not permissible regardless of length.
     2. The length and/or bulk of hair shall not be excessive or present a ragged, unkempt, unprofessional, or extreme appearance. Hair styling (outward flip, teased, Afro, perm, block, tapered or big hair) shall not cause hair to exceed in length or style the standard described in this section.
     3. Length of hair on the back of the head shall not extend over the top of the collar of the dress or station uniform when standing with head erect.
     4. Hair may cover part of the ear, but the lower one (1) inch of the ear (when measured from the bottom of the ear) must remain exposed. Hair bulk shall not exceed 2 inches in depth tapering at the sides and back to a maximum depth of 1 inch at the top of the collar when in uniform and a maximum of 1/4 inch beyond the outer edge of the ear. At no time shall hair styling interfere with proper sealing of the face piece or the proper fit and appearance of approved head gear.
     5. Hair in its natural state may extend below the top of the collar, but while on duty and/or in station or dress uniform must be worn in a pony tail which is to be pinned to the back of the member's head with hair clips or pins which approximate the color of the member's hair. A free dangling pony tail is not permitted for either male or female employees. The bulk of the pony tail (when pinned to the head) must adhere to the previously stated guidelines; that is, it cannot exceed 2 inches in depth.
     6. Any hairstyle or extreme hair color that significantly distracts from the uniform appearance of the members will not be allowed.
  3. **Sideburns**
     1. Sideburns shall be well groomed, neatly trimmed and shall not extend beyond the inner seal of the properly worn breathing apparatus face piece.
     2. Sideburns shall not extend below a horizontal line, level with the bottom point of the ear when the head is erect.
  4. **Cosmetics**
     1. Cosmetics shall be of conservative color and moderately applied while a member is in either Station or Dress Uniform.
  5. **Fingernails** 
     1. Fingernails shall be kept neat and trimmed.
     2. Ornamentation associated with fingernails is not permitted.
     3. Fingernail polish if worn, shall be neutral or conservative in color
  6. **Contact Lenses**
     1. While on duty or at any time while in station or dress uniform, personnel shall not wear contact lenses that alter the natural appearance of their eyes.
     2. Prohibited contact lenses include those that change the color, size, and shape of the wearer’s natural pupils, iris, or sclera, or that depict or portray symbols, products, slogans, logos, or sports teams.
  7. **Tattoos**
     1. Visible tattoos are prohibited while on duty or at any time while in station or dress uniform.
     2. Personnel with tattoos must cover any visible tattoos by either regulation uniform, or a neutral-colored skin covering, such as a sport wrap or bandage.  
          
        **Editor’s Note**: For fire departments that do not desire to adopt a no-show tattoo and piercing policy, the following provisions are offered. However, it must be disclosed that the ability of the organization to enforce regulations that rely upon subjective evaluation of the appropriateness of individual tattoos/piercings is fertile ground for litigation.
     3. *ALTERNATIVE PROVISIONS:*
        1. *While on duty or while in uniform, tattoos may only be displayed on the arms and legs. No other visible tattoos are permitted.*
        2. *The display of ANY unprofessional or offensive tattoo (nudity; sexually explicit or vulgar art, words, phrases; depictions of violence; profane language; symbols of hate (swastika, noose, etc.); or symbols, initials, or acronyms that represent criminal or oppressive organizations) regardless of location, while members are on duty or in uniform, is prohibited.*
        3. *While on duty or while in uniform, members may wear jewelry of a conservative style at their discretion so long as it does not create a safety concern. Members are prohibited from wearing any jewelry that is considered inappropriate or offensive to any individual or group.*
        4. *While on duty or while in uniform, all earrings will be attached to the ear lobe and will not rise above the ear canal opening.*
        5. *While on duty or while in uniform members may wear one stud earring per ear not to exceed 2 mm.*
        6. *Piercing of visible body parts other than those written in this policy are prohibited.* *No articles, other than earrings attached to the ears as specified above, shall be attached to or through the ear, nose, tongue, lip, eyebrow, or any other visible body part.*