

# City of Virginia Beach Department of EMS Policy

## Personal Appearance



**Issue Date:** 08/27/2007

**Revised Date:** 08/01/2022

**Section:** Administration

### 1. *Purpose*

The purpose of this policy is to establish personal appearance guidelines.

### 2. *Applicability*

This policy shall apply to all members of the Department of Emergency Medical Services.

### 3. *Policy Statement*

It shall be the policy of the Department to establish guidelines for the appearance of EMS providers based on occupational health and safety standards for healthcare providers. These standards are designed to keep the member and patient as safe as possible while maintaining a professional appearance.

### 4. *Policy*

#### 4.1. Personal Hygiene and Appearance

- 4.1.1. All personnel will be neat, clean, well-groomed, dressed in the appropriate uniform and maintain a professional appearance.
- 4.1.2. To decrease the possibility of a patient or co-worker having an adverse reaction, the use of fragrances should be kept to a minimum or avoided. Fragrances include perfume or cologne.
- 4.1.3. Fingernails shall be clean, neatly trimmed and should be of a length that does not interfere with patient care, infection control, and wearing protective gloves.

## 4.2. Hair

- 4.2.1. Must be clean, neat, and well-groomed.
- 4.2.2. Hair shall be worn in such a way that it does not interfere with normal duties, patient care, required safety equipment, infection, control, or present a safety hazard to the member.
- 4.2.3. Long hair shall not be exposed when turnout gear or other personal protective equipment designed to contain the hair is worn.
- 4.2.4. Hair length extending below the top of the logo on the back of the working uniform shirt must be pulled back into a ponytail, braid, or be otherwise neatly and inconspicuously fastened or pinned to the back of the head. Similar hair length management shall be adhered to when wearing dress or other uniform attire without logos.
- 4.2.5. Wigs or hairpieces are permitted and must conform to the hair standards.

## 4.3. Facial hair

- 4.3.1. Must be clean, neatly trimmed, of a natural color, and well-groomed.
- 4.3.2. Facial hair shall be worn in such a way that it does not interfere with normal duties, patient care, required safety equipment, or present a safety hazard to the member.
  - 4.3.2.1. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Facial Hairstyles and Filtering Facepiece Respirators infographic may be used as a reference for accepted facial hair growth for respirator use.
  - 4.3.2.2. If a member believes they need a reasonable accommodation due to a disability/medical necessity or religious exemption, they should advise their supervisor.
    - 4.3.2.2.1. Necessary medical information including applicable restrictions will be submitted directly to Occupational Safety and Health Services (OSHS) for disposition.
    - 4.3.2.2.2. Religious exemptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

## 4.4. Tattoos

- 4.4.1. May be visible below the top of the neckline (not visible on head or face).
- 4.4.2. If a tattoo is of an offensive, explicit, disruptive, or derogatory nature, it must be covered.
- 4.4.3. Supervisors have the authority to direct the covering of tattoos if, in their opinion, the tattoo is offensive. A notification should be made to the Division Chief for Human Resources via the member's chain of command if a tattoo is covered based on supervisor direction for follow-on investigation and determination.

4.5. Make-up shall blend with the natural skin and not appear exaggerated or artificial.

#### 4.6. Jewelry

- 4.6.1. Shall be worn in such a way that it does not interfere with normal duties, patient care, required safety equipment, infection control, or present a safety hazard to the member.
- 4.6.2. Only Department/station approved uniform insignias and pins shall be worn on the uniform.
- 4.6.3. Due to infection control considerations, wearing rings is discouraged. One ring on each hand may be worn. A wedding band and engagement ring set shall be considered one ring.
  - 4.6.3.1. For the safety of the member, rings should not be worn if they sit high or could potentially be caught or entangled in equipment. No ring shall interfere with wearing protective gloves.
- 4.6.4. For the safety of the member, necklaces are not recommended. If worn, they shall be kept inside the shirt.
- 4.6.5. Bracelets shall be snug fitting with no dangling charms or similar components.
  - 4.6.5.1. Only one bracelet is permitted on each arm.
  - 4.6.5.2. A wristwatch which displays time in seconds can be worn in addition to the single bracelet.
- 4.6.6. Earrings should be worn in good taste. It is recommended that only posts or small hoops (no larger than 1/4 inch) be worn.
  - 4.6.6.1. For the safety of the member, no dangling earrings, chain connector ear jewelry or any earring that impacts the ability to correctly don proper personal protective equipment, without removing the jewelry first, may be worn.
  - 4.6.6.2. Artificial holes in ears and ear lobes larger than those created by a traditional post shall be covered or closed.
- 4.6.7. Other visible body piercing jewelry (tongue, eyebrow, nose, lip, etc.) may be worn but cannot impact the ability to correctly don proper personal protective equipment without first removing the jewelry. This includes permanently embedded jewelry. It is recommended that only posts or small hoops be worn.

## **5. References and Related Policies/Procedures/Guidelines**

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- 5.1. CDC Facial Hairstyles and Filtering Facepiece Respirators infographic:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/pdfs/FacialHairWmask11282017-508.pdf>
- 5.2. VBEMS Disease Outbreak Plan
- 5.3. VBEMS Respiratory Protection Plan
- 5.4. VBEMS Uniform and Awards Handbook
- 5.5. VBEMS Job Descriptions
- 5.6. COVB Exposure Control Plan
- 5.7. COVB Respiratory Protection Program
- 5.8. OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens standard (29 CFR 1910.1030)
- 5.9. OSHA Respiratory Protection Standard (29 CFR 1910.134)
- 5.10. OSHA Personal Protective Equipment Standard (29 CFR 1910.132)
- 5.11. Current CDC guidelines

This policy shall become effective upon the approval of the Chief of Emergency Medical Services.



8/1/2022

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**EMS Chief**

**Date Signed**

<b>Policy Change Log</b>		
<b>Created:</b>	08/27/2007	Created on this date
<b>Revised:</b>	4/23/2020	Included with Uniform and Awards Handbook
<b>Revised:</b>	8/1/2022	Separated from Uniform and Awards Handbook and updated standards. Restructured into new format.