

## Personal Appearance Standards

### 1044.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

In order to project uniformity and neutrality toward the public and other members of the department, employees shall maintain their personal hygiene and appearance to project a professional image appropriate for this department and for their assignment.

### 1044.2 GROOMING STANDARDS

Unless otherwise stated and because deviations from these standards could present officer safety issues, the following appearance standards shall apply to all employees, except those whose current assignment would deem them not appropriate, and where the Chief of Police has granted exception.

#### 1044.2.1 HAIR

Hairstyles of all members shall be neat in appearance. For male sworn members, hair must not extend below the top edge of the uniform collar while assuming a normal stance.

For female sworn members, hair must be no longer than the horizontal level of the bottom of the uniform patch when the employee is standing erect, worn up or in a tightly wrapped braid or ponytail.

#### 1044.3 SIDEBURNS

Sideburns will not extend below the bottom of the ear lobe. They will be neatly trimmed so as not to cover the ears or extend toward the mouth in "muttonchops" style.

#### 1044.4 MUSTACHES

Mustaches will be neatly trimmed and can cover no more than the upper lip. They cannot be exaggerated to resemble the "handle bar" style. Ends of the mustache will not extend more than 1/2 inch below the corner of the mouth.

#### 1044.5 BEARDS

Beards will not be worn by sworn officers unless approved as part of a specialized assignment or as part of sanctioned department activities. Beards worn by non sworn employees will be neatly trimmed and not bushy in appearance.

#### 1044.6 TATTOO AND BODY PIERCING POLICY

It is the policy of the Azusa Police Department that tattoos, other forms of body art and/or objects used to pierce the body, shall not be visible during performance of duties in the course and scope of employment. Additionally, it is also the policy of this Department that tattoos, body art and/or objects utilized in body piercing shall not be displayed to other City and Department employees while on or in property and/or facilities owned, operated or under the dominion and control of the City/Department, where the content of the tattoo, body art and/or piercing may be perceived by

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a reasonable City/Department employee as indicative of harassment or discrimination based on race, religion, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical handicap, medical condition, marital status, sex or age or of otherwise creating a Department environment having a negative impact upon the efficient operation of the employee or of the City/Department. For example, although a tattoo of a Nazi swastika may be implanted on a body part in such manner that it is concealable during performance in the course and scope of employment, the display of that same tattoo while disrobed in a locker room, may be reasonably perceived by a fellow employee as being violative of this policy.

#### 1044.6.1 METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION

The Azusa Police Department acknowledges that one (1) or more individuals employed by it prior to the adoption of this Policy, wear tattoos and perhaps objects of body piercing. Such individuals are nonetheless fully subject to this policy if they add additional tattoos or piercings subsequent to the effective date of this policy. Compliance can be effectuated by means of:

- (a) Removal of the tattoo or body piercing object,
- (b) The wearing of a Department approved uniform in a Department-approved manner such that the tattoo and/or object of body piercing is not visible during performance of duties in the course and scope of employment,
- (c) The wearing of a Department-approved unobtrusive device which covers the tattoo and/or object of body piercing, such as but not limited to a bandage that does not impede the safe and efficient performance of duties.

#### 1044.6.2 RATIONALE FOR POLICY

This Department already requires of its employees certain uniformity in dress and in grooming standards. The purpose of such policies is in part to make Police Department employees readily recognizable to members of the public, to promote the esprit de corps or reasonably calculated to be necessary to efficient Department operations, and to enhance safety. These fundamental policy decisions are no less applicable to the issue of employees displaying tattoos and/or body piercing. In significant part, the safe, efficient operation of the Department is contingent upon acceptance by the public that the Department serves, of the legitimacy and acceptability of Department employees who protect, serve and enforce the laws of the community. The Department has a rational belief that allowing its officers to wear different styles or colors of uniforms (or no uniform at all), to be groomed with significantly different lengths of hair, uniquely colored hair, and the like, would have a negative impact upon not only internal esprit de corps, but upon the building of a positive bond with the community, as well. The Department's rational perspective is no less real with regard to tattoos and body piercing. The wearing by Department employees of visible body art of infinite style and color, as well as the wearing of visible body piercing objects, are reasonably anticipated to be offensive to one or more members of the public and the Department, and are reasonably anticipated to be a distraction to the public, whose focus should be upon the Department employee and his or her role, and not upon art which an employee has chosen to decorate him or herself with.

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### 1044.6.3 LEGAL BASIS FOR POLICY

The United States Supreme Court case of Kelley v. Johnson (1976) 425 U.S. 238 empowers police departments to make rules and regulations affecting uniformity and esprit de corps, so long as there is a rational justification for the policy. As the High Court stated at 425 U.S. 247:

"Choice of organization, dress, and equipment for law enforcement personnel is a decision entitled to the same sort of presumption of legislative validity as are state choices designed to promote other aims within the cognizance of the State's policy power."

### 1044.6.4 EXCEPTIONS

Exceptions to these standards may be made when the nature of an assignment or medical condition requires or permits noncompliance with this policy.

### 1044.7 EXEMPTIONS

Members who seek cultural (e.g., culturally protected hairstyles) or other exemptions to this policy that are protected by law should generally be accommodated (Government Code § 12926). A member with an exemption may be ineligible for an assignment if the individual accommodation presents a security or safety risk. The Chief of Police should be advised any time a request for such an accommodation is denied or when a member with a cultural or other exemption is denied an assignment based on a safety or security risk.