

**NORTH KANSAS CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT
OPERATIONS MANUAL**



TITLE: Grooming Standards	OM#: GDL102
TYPE: Guideline	Effective: 06-06-2013 Updated: 4-28-2016

I. Purpose:

- A. Due to the unique position of authority and public trust afforded to Fire Department personnel, a high standard of grooming is expected by both the Department and the community we serve. The purpose of these regulations is to accommodate safe performance of duties, a professional public image, reasonable flexibility, neat appearance in uniform, and parameters that recognize physical difference.

II. Scope:

- A. These policies are in effect any time that department personnel are on duty or are representing the department. All members shall adhere to these standards.

III. Authority and Responsibility:

- A. The Fire Chief shall have final authority over what constitutes vulgar or offensive images, symbols, or language when disagreement occurs.
- B. Adherence to the letter of these regulations does not preclude supervising officers from requiring adjustments or modifications when, in their judgment, a safety hazard, or recurrent grooming problem exists.

IV. Procedure:

A. Hair:

1. Hair must be maintained so as not to extend down the forehead beyond the uppermost portion of the eyebrows, or on the sides beyond the lowest edge of the earlobe. Hair in back that is longer than the bottom edge of the collar must be restrained with a bun or a ponytail braid, or cornrow-style braids, which may hang down below the collar as long as it is restrained and does not exceed three (3) inches of hair mass depth as stated in IV.A.2. The length of ponytails shall not be more than three (3) inches past the bottom edge of the collar.
2. The depth of the hair mass, when measured at right angles from

any part of the scalp (outward or upward), shall not exceed three (3) inches.

3. If hair must be secured, (mechanically restrained), to meet these requirements, the device or method used for restraint, must not interfere with the safe and proper use of helmets, face pieces or other required safety equipment. It must remain restrained under all conditions of work or activity.
4. In no event shall the length of the hair or the style impair the proper wearing of the helmet, hood or self-contained breathing apparatus.
5. Hair may be any color that naturally occurs in human hair. Any stripes or spots, excluding those of natural occurrence, shall not be permitted.
6. Hair must be clean and neatly groomed, and shall not present a ragged, neglected, or unkempt appearance. Extreme or bizarre designs as well as those created by shaving certain parts of the head are not permitted, i.e. Mohawk, Monk or letters and symbols. If a company officer needs assistance in determining whether a hair style is extreme or bizarre, they shall contact the duty Battalion Chief.
7. The wearing of a wig or hairpiece while in uniform is allowed for the purpose of covering natural baldness or disfigurement. When worn, it shall conform to the haircut criteria specified in this policy.
8. Ribbons, feathers or other flammable ornamentation may not be worn in the hair. Inconspicuous bobby pins or conservative barrettes, hairbands, or ponytail holders, which blend with the color of the hair are acceptable.

B. Facial Hair:

1. Personnel shall be clean-shaven when reporting for duty or representing the Department except as noted below.
2. Sideburns must be cut or maintained so they do not contact the self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) face-piece seal and must be completely covered by the protective hood.
3. Mustaches may be worn, but must be cut, neatly groomed, and maintained so they do not contact the exhalation valve or face-piece seal of any self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA). A small patch of beard, shaped, centered, and allowed to grow under the lower lip, is permissible.

Note: *The North Kansas City Fire Department shall not permit respirators with tight-fitting face-pieces to be worn by employees who have: a) Facial hair that comes between the sealing surface of the face-piece and the face or that interferes with valve function. b) Any condition that interferes with the face to face-piece seal or valve function.*

4. All other facial hair of any type, except as noted in IV.B.2 and IV.B.3 above, is prohibited.

5. Facial hair may be any color that naturally occurs in human hair. Any stripes or spots, excluding those of natural occurrence, are not permitted.

C. Jewelry:

1. Wearing of wristwatches and identification bracelets is permitted but must not interfere with the usage of gloves and turnouts and not be subject to catching or snagging.
2. Earrings are not permitted to be worn by on duty fire suppression personnel. This is due to the possibility they can be hooked or snagged while performing daily duties or emergency operations.
3. Necklaces, crosses, pendants, and medallions shall not be worn exposed while on duty. It is permissible to wear such items beneath undershirts.
4. Wearing of rings is permitted if not overly large or ornate and will not expose the individual to potential injury. A ring, or multiple rings, which could interfere with dexterity or the rapid donning of safety equipment, including medical gloves, is not permitted.

***Note:** For increased safety, firefighters are encouraged to not wear jewelry of any kind while on duty. Those firefighters choosing to wear jewelry next to the skin may be at risk of increased thermal injury.*

D. Body Piercings:

1. Body piercing ornamentation visible to the public is not allowed with the uniform.

E. Tattoos and Body Branding:

1. Intentional scarring of the body, commonly known as "body branding art", or foreign objects placed under the skin for the purpose of decoration must conform to the same rules in force for tattoos.
2. Tattoos, body art, or brandings on the body that are prejudicial to discipline, morale, or bring about discredit to the Fire Department are prohibited. Any designs that are obscene, sexually explicit, advocate or symbolize sex, gender, racial, religious, ethnic or national origin discrimination are prohibited. In addition, designs that advocate or symbolize gang affiliation, supremacist or extremist groups, or drug/alcohol use/abuse are prohibited.
3. Employees shall not have tattoos, body art, or branding/decoration visible above the neck line, or below the wrist, with the exception of one tattoo in the place of a wedding ring, located on the left ring finger and no wider than 3/8", is permitted as long as that tattoo is not inappropriate or offensive.

4. Current department members who wish to apply a new visible tattoo must conform to previously stated tattoo rules. (Referring to E 2 & E 3).
5. In general, tattoos shall not be visible while department members are in a class "A" uniform.
6. Intentional mutilation of any body part visible to the public is prohibited. Examples include, but are not limited to: Split or forked tongue, stretched out nose, lip, or earlobes, or intentionally filed or altered teeth or anything creating an unnatural appearance.
7. Potential employees shall be given a copy of these rules and sign a form disclosing any possible violations of these standards. The Fire Chief shall have final authority as to the acceptability of the candidate's visible tattoos.

F. *Make-up and Cosmetics:*

1. The type and amount of cosmetic material used shall not be excessive and must be non-flammable in composition. The wearing of any cosmetics must not interfere with the proper donning, fit, or operation of any safety equipment.
2. Nail polish and lipstick, when worn, shall be conservative in nature. Fingernail length shall be such that they do not interfere with the donning of, or compromise the integrity of, PPE or safety gloves.
3. Contact lenses may be worn for the purpose of vision correction or to change to another naturally occurring eye color. Contact lenses with symbols, letters, or designs are prohibited.
4. Dental ornamentation, symbols, jewelry implants, or decoration, beyond the scope of cosmetic correction, whitening or function, is prohibited.

Safety Reference: NFPA – 1500 Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program – Chapter 7.