



APPEARANCE AND HYGIENE POLICY

Effective Date: January 20, 2014

Owner	Human Resources
Reviewer(s)	Human Resources
Approver(s)	County Manager
Applicable Policies	ADA & Reasonable Accommodation; Progressive Disc
Applicable Documents	N/A
Storage Location	DCo Services Hub, DocTract
Last Review Date	07/01/2025
Next Review Date	07/01/2028
Review Cycle	Three Years

1. PURPOSE

Durham County requires its employees to be well groomed and dressed appropriately for the work environment.

2. POLICY

This policy establishes standards for appropriate employee appearance and hygiene. It serves as a comprehensive guideline and is intended to complement any applicable department-specific policies or procedures.

3. APPLICABILITY

All County employees covered under the Personnel Ordinance, as well as those included under a Memorandum of Understanding, are subject to this policy.

4. DEFINITIONS

Appearance - Visible characteristics which include but are not limited to attire, hair, piercings, tattoos, and scarifications.

Appropriate - Suitable for the regularly performed job tasks in accordance with County standards.

Attire - Apparel that includes hosiery, footwear, jewelry and items worn on the head.

Flip-flop - Rubber or vinyl thong sandal.

Hygiene - The practice of cleanliness principles.

Piercings, Tattoos, and Scarifications - Body art; piercing, and deliberate cutting of the skin that leaves a scar.

Reasonable Person Standard - The standard of a person who exercises average care, skill, and judgment in conduct.



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5. GENERAL GUIDELINES

A. Appropriate appearance and hygiene standards include but are not limited to:

- Clean, pressed, properly fitting business attire or uniform
- Clean, combed, neatly arranged hair and groomed facial hair that do not interfere with job performance or pose a safety hazard.
- Odor-free, with perfume or cologne used sparingly (undetectable outside an employee's workspace) or not at all so as not to trigger allergies of others.
- Visible piercings, tattoos and scarifications that do not interfere with job performance or pose a safety hazard and in no way offend based on the reasonable person standard

B. Supervisor Expectations

- The supervisor must monitor employees to ensure that they are well groomed, and dressed appropriately for work.
- The supervisor must coach and counsel an employee who reports to work with inappropriate appearance and hygiene.
 - If clarification on any aspect of appropriate appearance and hygiene is needed, the supervisor should consult with Human Resources.

C. Employee Expectations

- Any employee who reports to work with inappropriate appearance and hygiene must leave the workplace to make the necessary adjustments, and return to work.
- Employees must use appropriate and available leave for any work time missed due to initial failure to comply with this policy.
- Continued failure to report to work with appropriate appearance and hygiene will result in the employee returning home without pay and/or receiving disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

D. Request for standards modification(s)

- Requests to modify the appearance and hygiene standards must be submitted in writing to the supervisor for consideration and may be based upon the following
 - a religious or cultural traditions, or
 - a medical need documented by a physician.



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- Upon receipt of a modification request, the supervisor must consult with the department director and Human Resources before making a decision.
- The response to the modification request must be in alignment with County's policy. (See ADA and Reasonable accommodation policy)

E. Inappropriate appearance and hygiene standard:

- Examples of inappropriate appearance and hygiene standard (not an inclusive list):
 - Clothes with holes or frayed areas
 - Denim, Jeans or Capri pants, mid-calf or shorter (unless approved by the department director)
 - Provocative, revealing or tight fitting clothing (including exposed undergarments and midriff, leggings, miniskirts, see-through tops, spaghetti straps, halter tops, tank tops, etc.)
 - Shorts, skorts, miniskirts or short dresses
 - Sweatsuits and jogging suits
 - Flip flops, or houseshoes
 - T-shirts with advertising, writing (excluding DCo apparel) or offensive images
 - Unkempt hair or facial hair
 - Strong permeating body odors

6. RESPONSIBILITY

- It is the responsibility of supervisors and managers to uniformly administer, communicate, and ensure compliance.
- It is the responsibility of the Human Resources Department to interpret, monitor, and update the policy content.
- It is all employees' responsibility to comply with policy guidelines.
- Any violation or policy misuse will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

REVISION HISTORY

Version ID	Revision Date	Author	Reason for Revision
v.1.0-2014	01-20-2014	Human Resources	Adopted
v.2.0-2025	07-01-2025	Human Resources	Reformat, added wording