

PALM BEACH COUNTY FIRE RESCUE
OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE: #I-02

ISSUED DATE: 06/21/94 REVISED DATE: 12/10/14 IMPLEMENTED DATE: 01/12/15

PROFESSIONAL APPEARANCE STANDARDS

SCOPE: This policy applies to all employees and reservists of Palm Beach County Fire Rescue.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this policy is to establish a guideline for personnel in order to project a professional image to the public.

AUTHORITY: Fire Rescue Administrator
Department's Pride and Protocol Uniform Essentials Guide
Policy #I-41- Respiratory Protection Program

POLICY: All personnel shall present themselves in a neat and professional appearance while on-duty or at department sponsored events while wearing a uniform. Immediate supervisors are responsible for assuring their personnel conform to the professional appearance standards of the department.

FORM: [Professional Appearance Appeals Request](#)

PROCEDURE: Management shall have the sole right to determine whether or not an employee has met the professional appearance standard, and shall have the right to direct the employee to correct problems with their appearance at the time of discovery by a supervisor. Employees who disagree with this directive may apply to the Appearance Board for final review.

A. GROOMING:

1. The hair, including sideburns, shall be conservative and evenly trimmed. It shall be well groomed, shall be tapered proportionately along the sides and back of the head. The hair shall present a professional appearance. In no case will the length, style, or bulk of the hair interfere with the proper fit, use of, or cause compromise to the proper function of (PPE) personal protective equipment.
 - a. When worn as styled, front may not extend into or below the eyebrow.

- b. Side hair may cover only that portion of the ear above the center of the ear canal opening.
 - c. Hair on the back of the head may not extend below the bottom edge of the rear of the collar of the duty uniform shirt.
 - d. No designs, sculptures or writing shall be permitted.
 - e. Hair must be a color naturally occurring in human hair. When hats/caps are worn, hair must be neat and shall not protrude from beneath the hat in an outward manner.
 - f. Females in Operations must secure their hair in a style so as not to impede operational activity.
 - g. Males - no pony tails.
2. Facial hair will remain clean shaven at all times and meet the descriptions below. For the purposes of health and safety regarding respirator / SCBA use, no facial hair may touch or be between the face and the face piece seal of a respirator or SCBA mask.
 3. Sideburns shall be uniform from top to bottom and be neatly trimmed. They shall not be excessively heavy or bushy and will not extend below the bottom of the earlobe, or extend forward toward the face as to compromise the respirator / SCBA mask seal.
 4. Beards and goatees, to include lip beards, are prohibited for uniformed personnel with the exception of Support Services. If worn by Support Services personnel, beards are to be neatly trimmed as to not pose a safety hazard from machinery, tools, or equipment. Beards may not be trimmed in a fashion which may constitute designs, contain beads or jewelry, or be braided.
 5. Mustaches may be worn:
 - a. If it is neatly trimmed and it does not present a bushy un-kept appearance, and;
 - b. If it does not grow in to resemblance of a beard or onto the chin / jawline, and;
 - c. If it follows the natural contour of the upper lip not to extend to the point where it touches or is between the face and the face piece seal of a respirator or SCBA mask.
 6. Fingernails may not compromise the integrity of protective gloves and, in all cases, may not extend more than ¼ inch beyond the end of the fingertip.
 7. It is recommended that personnel use colognes and scented products sparingly as not to be offense to other personnel and the public, or to potentially cause an adverse reaction in patients.
 8. All members are expected to maintain good personal hygiene while on duty.

9. Cosmetics are discouraged for operations personnel. If worn, cosmetics must be of a natural color, used conservatively and in good taste.

B. JEWELRY and BODY ORNAMENTATION:

1. While on duty, in uniform, or while representing the department in any official capacity, body ornamentation shall not be visible or exposed.
2. Jewelry, if worn with uniform, shall be secured under normal articles of clothing (i.e. necklaces placed inside uniform shirt).
3. Jewelry concealed under clothing should be avoided because of hazards such as: heat collection, electrical conduction, and snagging.
4. Earrings shall not be worn by personnel while on duty and shall not be worn with the Department's dress uniform. Female administrative personnel are exempt, and may wear post style earrings with the decorative front no larger than ¼ inch diameter. No more than one ear post is allowed per ear, and that post must be in the ear lobe. Ear plugs are not allowed. Earlobes expanded by rings are not permitted.
5. Large empty, obviously visible piercing holes which appear as anatomically abnormal are not permitted and must be covered.
6. Implants which cause an anatomically abnormal appearance are not permitted.

C. TATTOOS:

1. At the posting of this policy revision (10/01/2011), new tattoos on the head, neck, face and hands are expressly prohibited. Employees who currently have visible tattoos of this nature must declare those tattoos prior to the final effective date of this policy revision.
2. A written notice of declaration, to include description and location will be filed with Fire Rescue Human Resources and added to the employees personnel file.
3. Visible tattoos must be covered at all times that depict, describe or otherwise refer to sexual conduct, acts, organs, or preferences and/or depict, describe or otherwise refer to intolerance of, or discrimination against, any race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, familial status, marital status, or sexual orientation, or refer to or are commonly associated with any organization or groups which advocate such intolerance or discrimination and those that are detrimental to good order and discipline and incompatible with Fire Rescue's purpose.

D. DRESS CODE:

1. Palm Beach County Fire Rescue issues uniforms according to the Collective Bargaining Agreement and department policy. Each individual has the privilege of wearing the uniform and should wear it in such a manner that displays professionalism. All uniformed personnel are expected to maintain a professional appearance. Uniforms are to be laundered, pressed, and in good repair. Uniforms worn while on duty, or while attending department sanctioned functions must be department approved, and purchased or issued by the department quartermaster system.

2. Off duty personnel when attending County scheduled training sessions, classes, or meetings, will adhere to the following dress code and shall not wear attire such as:
 - a. Shorts
 - b. Cut-off jeans
 - c. Flip-flops
 - d. Tank tops
 - e. Clothing with offensive images or slogans

This standard is necessary to ensure all off duty personnel, present a professional image to the public. Members of the County and other Departments are often included in county scheduled training sessions, and as such, personnel should conform to appropriate dress code standards. With the exception of department sanctioned functions, Class A, B, C and D uniforms shall not be worn off duty.

3. When employees perform Public Education activities, Fire Safety Inspections or public presentations, attending classroom training activities or other times at headquarters, they shall wear a clean, pressed uniform.
4. Investigations and the Training & Safety Division may be allowed to wear other uniforms as appropriate to specific work being done (i.e. jumpsuits, Arson Task Force T-shirts, and “undercover” attire).
5. Personnel may wear department approved T-shirts, shorts, and sweat suits during on-duty fitness training. Proper footwear must be worn at all times when participating in any and all fitness training.
6. The Urban Search and Rescue Team may wear the Department approved team T-shirt (long sleeve/short sleeve) when participating in approved team training or when on deployment. Special Operations personnel may wear the Department approved team T-shirt (long sleeve/short sleeve) when participating in dirty training.
7. Individualized Battalion logos for T-shirts may be approved by the Deputy Chief of Operations for working out, but shall be limited in design to a 4 ½” logo on the upper left front area in place of Department logo. All T-shirts shall conform to Department specifications. Logo T-shirts are not approved for purchase by the Department Quarter-master system.
8. All personnel working on a particular unit will wear the same type of uniform.
9. Department issued job shirts are authorized for uniform wear for bargaining unit employees.
10. Employees shall have in their possession all necessary uniforms, to include at a minimum a Class C uniform while on duty. All employees shall be responsible for the condition of all said items issued to them, and shall maintain them in good condition. Uniforms showing signs of poor condition (e.g. tattered, torn, severely faded, faded department emblem, etc.) are not permitted.
11. All uniforms and/or insignias shall be considered the property of Fire-Rescue and will not be used without approval from the Fire Rescue Administrator.

12. With the exception of department sanctioned functions, Class A, B, C and D uniforms shall not be worn off duty.
13. The wearing or the displaying of the insignia of Palm Beach County Fire Rescue is prohibited when engaged in activities for the purpose of endorsing a commercial product or business, to express a preference for a political candidate or political issue, or when discredit to the County might result (i.e. while patronizing a drinking establishment).
14. Uniform shirts are to remain tucked in at all times.
15. Shoes and boots shall be black. Patent leather shoes are acceptable. Heels will not be in excess of 1". All footwear will be clean and shined at all times. If boots have zippers or laces, they shall be zipped or tied at all times, pants will not be bloused in boots.
16. Belts shall be black and kept in good condition with a clean and shined appearance.
17. All badges, pins, and insignias worn with the department uniform shall be issued by or sanctioned by the department and remain neatly polished.
18. Sunglasses if worn, must be of a non-ornate style and with a neutral color frame. Sunglasses may not be worn while indoors.
19. Personnel may wear the department uniform while either traveling to duty, or when returning home from duty. If wearing the department uniform while traveling to and from duty, it must be a complete uniform compliant with all aspects of this policy and there shall be no comingling of uniform clothing and civilian attire.
20. Loss, damage, or theft of uniform items is to be reported as outlined in policy I-43.

E. OPERATIONS PERSONNEL UNIFORMS:

1. Class A Dress Uniform:
 - a. Dress Uniform Hat with Hat Badge and other designations appropriate to rank.
 - b. Collar brass, badges, insignias, patches, awards and name plates shall be displayed in accordance with the Department's Pride and Protocol Uniform Essentials Guide.
 - c. Double Breasted Navy coat with matching Class A pants.
 - d. Long sleeve shirt according to rank with military creases. Firefighter and Driver will wear blue shirts and Lieutenant and above will wear white shirts.
 - e. White undershirt, if worn shall have no lettering, or insignia that is visible through uniform shirt. Black uniform tie with approved tie clasp.
 - f. Department issued black leather belt. Buckle to be either silver or gold buckle according to rank, department issued, or Fire Department Maltese Cross, or Palm Beach County Service Award Buckle.
 - g. Black plain socks.
 - h. Black low cut leather shoes, either high-gloss officer style or highly polished leather. No boots of any type.

2. Class B Uniform:

- a. Long sleeve shirt according to rank with military creases and collar brass for Lieutenant and above appropriate to rank. Firefighter and Driver will wear blue shirts and Lieutenant and above will wear white shirts.
- b. White undershirt, if worn shall have no lettering or insignia that is visible through uniform shirt.
- c. Collar brass, badges, insignias, patches, awards and name plates shall be displayed in accordance with the Department's Pride and Protocol Uniform Essentials Guide.
- d. Black uniform tie with approved tie clasp.
- e. Officer style pants. NO work or EMS pants.
- f. Department issued black leather belt. Buckle to be either silver or gold buckle according to rank, department issued, or Fire Department Maltese Cross, or Palm Beach County Service Award Buckle.
- g. Black plain socks.
- h. Black low cut leather shoes, either high-gloss officer style or highly polished leather. No boots of any type.
- i. NOTE: Female approved attire option: white uniform long sleeve shirt, color depicted by rank, with Department approved tie and skirt (dark navy blue) or dress slacks (dark navy blue) with black pumps or uniform shoes. (Not an option for operations personnel.)

3. Class C Uniform:

- a. Short sleeve blue or white shirt according to rank with military creases. Firefighter and Driver will wear blue shirts and Lieutenant and above will wear white shirts.
- b. Long sleeve blue or white shirt without a tie according to rank with military creases. Firefighter and Driver will wear blue shirts and Lieutenant and above will wear white shirts.
- c. White undershirt, if worn shall have no lettering, or insignia that is visible through uniform shirt.
- d. Collar brass, badges, insignias, patches, awards and name plates shall be displayed in accordance with the Department's Pride and Protocol Uniform Essentials Guide.
- e. Officer style, work or EMS pants.
- f. Department issued black leather belt. Buckle to be either silver or gold buckle according to rank, department issued, or Fire Department Maltese Cross, or Palm Beach County Service Award Buckle.
- g. Black plain socks with low cut shoes.
- h. Black low cut leather shoes, either high-gloss officer style or highly polished leather, or boots.

- i. District Chiefs are to wear complete Class D uniform except when performing Public Education activities, Fire Safety Inspections or public presentations, attending classroom training activities or other times at headquarters, they shall wear a clean, pressed Class C or above uniform.
 - j. NOTE FOR NON-OPERATIONAL PERSONNEL: Female approved attire option: white uniform short or long sleeve shirt, color depicted by rank, with Department approved skirt (dark navy blue) or dress slacks (dark navy blue) with black pumps or uniform shoes.
4. Class D Uniform:
- a. Long or short sleeve polo shirt appropriate color dependant on rank.
 - b. B.O.S.S. personnel listed as Fire Safety Specialist shall wear either white or grey polo shirts.
 - c. Alarm Office Communications Supervisors shall wear white polo shirts.
 - d. Alarm Office personnel and Operations personnel shall wear heather grey polo shirts with their name and position embroidered on the front right side of the shirt and Fire Rescue on the back.
 - e. Staff Captain and above, shall wear white polo shirts with their name and position embroidered on the front right side.
 - f. Captains, and below, shall wear a grey polo shirt.
 - g. Officer style, work, or EMS pants.
 - h. Department issued black leather belt. Buckle to be either silver or gold buckle according to rank, department issued, or Fire Department Maltese Cross, or Palm Beach County Service Award Buckle.
 - i. Black plain socks with low cut shoes.
 - j. Black low cut leather shoes, either high-gloss officer style or highly polished leather, or boots.
5. Jumpsuits:
- a. The wearing of Department-issued jumpsuits will be allowed only after 1600 hours. The zipper must be fastened no lower than the top of the chest pockets. Long sleeve Department issued t-shirts may be permitted under jumpsuits for cold weather.
 - b. Paramedic will wear Paramedic patch on right shoulder and Department patch on left shoulder 1” below seam. All others will wear Department patch on both shoulders 1” below seam.
 - c. Flight medics shall be allowed to wear Department issued flight suits while on duty assigned to Trauma Hawk.
 - d. Investigations and the Training & Safety Division may be allowed to wear Department issued jumpsuits appropriate to specific work being done.

- F. ADMINISTRATIVE (NON-BARGAINING PERSONNEL):
1. All personnel shall maintain a neat and professional appearance, dressing appropriately for the work tasks. Casual items such as t-shirts, flip-flops, and tank tops shall not be worn.
 2. Female personnel who are issued uniforms may either wear approved slacks or skirt with uniform shirt, and black shoes.
- G. ALARM OFFICE:
1. All personnel may wear either the uniform pants and shoes with a Department approved polo shirt as supplied by the CBA or the Department's Class C uniform.
 2. All personnel must have the Department's Class C uniform at the Communications Center at all times.
- H. BUREAU OF SAFETY SERVICES;
- Bargaining and non-bargaining personnel may wear any Department Class (A-D) uniform, as appropriate.
- I. SUPPORT SERVICES;
1. All bargaining unit Support Services personnel will wear the appropriate and complete uniform issued by Fire Rescue or as provided by the County approved rental company. All Chief Officer's will wear the uniform as described in this policy.
 2. Mechanics may wear a mechanic's belt.
- J. ACCESSORIES:
1. Winter Jackets/Windbreakers:
 - a. Shall be only Department approved.
 - b. Department patches shall be worn only on winter jackets on both shoulders 1" below seam.
 - c. Windbreakers will be worn as issued.
 2. Hats:
 - a. Only Department issued ball caps are allowed and must be worn with the bill centered over the nose.
 - b. Boonie Hats shall only be worn during extended operational periods when working in direct sunlight and will be at the discretion of the Incident Commander.
 - c. Knit Caps shall only be worn when cold weather permits, 55°F degrees or less.
 3. Collar Insignia:
 - a. Personnel shall wear only Department issued insignias.

- b. Collar brass shall be displayed in accordance with the Department's Pride and Protocol Uniform Essentials Guide.
- 4. Badge:

Department badges (if issued) will be displayed above the pocket on the left front side of the shirt or jacket.
- 5. Nameplate:
 - a. Shall be worn centered above the right pocket with no more than 1/8" gap from the bottom of the nameplate and the top of the shirt pocket seam.
 - b. Serving Since pins will be attached under the nameplate.
 - c. Silver in color for firefighters, FF/PM & Drivers and gold in color for officers, Lieutenant and above.
- 6. Departmental Award Bars:

Department awards shall be displayed in accordance with the Department's Pride and Protocol Uniform Essentials Guide.
- 7. Patches:

Personnel may wear their specialty department approved patch in place of the Paramedic Patch on Class "B" or "C" uniform shirts. The patch must have a continual border and not exceed the dimensions of the Palm Beach County Fire Rescue patch (3-3/4").

K. VIOLATIONS:

Employees whose appearance becomes disheveled or unprofessional may be approached by a supervisor or ranking officer and may be asked to improve their personal professional appearance. Employees are expected to comply with any such reasonable requests at the time of the request. Employees cited for unprofessional appearance will be issued an Employee Development form at that time. If an employee fails to comply with any such reasonable request, the District Chief or Battalion Chief shall make the determination if the employee is to be relieved of duty. The affected employee may request photographs be taken for the purposes of presenting their case to the Professional Appearance Board.

L. PROFESSIONAL APPEARANCE BOARD:

- 1. If an employee feels that a request made of them is unreasonable, they may request in writing an appeal to the departments Professional Appearance Board. A request for appeal must be presented to the immediate supervisor prior to completion of that shift or duty day the employee is notified by their supervisor. Photographs of the professional appearance issue the employee disagrees with must be attached to the appeal.
- 2. The Professional Appearance Board shall consist of three personnel. One member shall be an employee selected by the Fire Rescue Administrator; the second member shall be an employee selected by Local #2928; and the third person is one mutually

- agreed upon by the two other representatives. All appeals shall be heard within a reasonable time of the written request for appeal by the employee.
3. All decisions of the Professional Appearance Board shall be binding on the employees. The Professional Appearance Board will be the sole authority to determine whether or not an individual's personal appearance is acceptable or not.
 4. This appeals process shall not apply for requests to change or replace uniforms which are determined, in the sole discretion of the Department, to be disheveled or unserviceable.

M. REVISION HISTORY:

May of 2011, Policy I-2 Dress Code and Policy I-22 Professional Appearance Standards were merged. Policy I-2 took on the name Professional Appearance Standards and I-22 was eliminated. Language was introduced placing restrictions on tattoos, body ornamentation, and relaxing the language concerning mustaches. Language concerning violations and immediate compliance were strengthened in relation to the grooming board section.

July of 2014, this policy was modified to add language about implants, clarify the meaning of facial hair not interfering with the respirator/SCBA mask seal, clarification of length of hair on the back of the head, length and color of finger nails, clarification on earrings for uniformed administrative staff, use of colognes and scented products, personal hygiene, use of cosmetics, wearing of sunglasses, and the addition of photographs for filing appeals to the personal appearance board.