



# The Aberdeen Police Department Policies & Procedures Manual Chapter Contents



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# The Aberdeen Police Department Policies & Procedures Manual



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Chapter 23 Appearance  
Section 01 Personal Appearance

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GO 17-017, 10/18/2017  
Supersedes Original Policy

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## A. Policy

1. All employees of the Department are required to be neat, clean, and well-groomed at all times, except where authorized to dress otherwise in a covert investigative assignment.

## B. Standards of Appearance and Inspections (22.1.6)

1. Employees shall keep uniform and civilian clothes clean and pressed at all times.
2. Footwear, leather equipment, and brass, shall be regularly polished and side-arms shall be clean and serviceable at all times.
3. Each Police Officer, Police Officer First Class, and Corporal will be inspected daily at roll call, by the Supervisor in Charge. (53.1.1c)
  - a. Clothing - Clothing will be clean and give a pressed appearance before each tour of duty.
  - b. Footwear - Shoes will be free of dirt and shined.
    - 1) Foul weather footwear will be conservative in appearance.
  - c. Fingernails - Employees will keep their fingernails trimmed and free of dirt.
    - 1) Females, while in uniform, may wear only conservative polish or coating on their fingernails.
4. Reports indicating outstanding or substandard conditions are a non-record document, and shall be filed in the employee's personnel file for one year, and then destroyed.

## C. Hair Regulations (22.1.6)

1. Every sworn employee of the Department, while on duty, will be required to keep his/her hair in a neat and well-groomed manner.
  - a. These regulations are not meant to be all inclusive, and final judgment rests with the individual supervisor.
2. Male Employees
  - a. Hair on the crown and sides of the head shall be neatly groomed.
    - 1) The length and bulk of the hair shall not interfere with the proper wearing of any authorized uniform headgear.
    - 2) Hair in front will not be groomed so that it falls below the band of properly worn headgear.
  - b. Hair shall be worn in a tapered look, and when combed shall not touch either the ear or the collar.
  - c. Hair on the back of the head shall be tapered down to the neck.
  - d. Sideburns, if an individual chooses to wear them, shall be neatly trimmed and tapered in the same manner as prescribed for hair.
    - 1) Sideburns shall not extend below the earlobe, shall be of even width (NOT FLARED), and shall end with a clean-shaven horizontal line.
  - e. Mustaches will be kept clean, neatly trimmed, and will not be worn to allow the hair to hang over the upper line of the upper lip.



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- 1) No portion of the mustache shall extend below the corners of the mouth or one-half inch beyond the corners of the mouth, and no extreme styles may be worn, such as the handlebar mustache.
- f. Wigs or hairpieces shall not be worn on duty except to cover natural baldness or disfiguration.
  - 1) If worn under these circumstances, the wig or hairpiece will conform to all Department hair regulations.
3. Beards
  - a. Sworn employees are prohibited from wearing beards, goatees, and other designer facial hairstyles that require partial shaving, unless authorized by the Chief of Police or designee.
  - b. Beards are permitted for officers who are assigned to covert operations, and for certified medical reasons, when approved by the Chief of Police or designee.
  - c. Medical Condition Related to Beards
    - 1) The Chief of Police or designee may authorize a sworn officer to wear a beard or maintain an alternate shaving schedule if he has an existing medical condition that restricts or prevents them from shaving.
    - 2) Sworn officer that have an existing medical condition that restricts or prevents them from shaving shall submit to the Chief of Police through the chain of command, an original and fully completed **Form 0190** Beard Exemption that documents the medical condition, signed by a licensed dermatologist.
    - 3) Sworn officers shall renew their Beard Exemption form every six (6) months.
    - 4) Respective Division Commanders are responsible for maintaining completed Beard Exemption forms.
  - d. Beard Appearance Standards
    - 1) A sworn employee, approved to wear a beard because of a medical condition, shall keep his facial hair neatly trimmed not to exceed ¼ inch in length.
    - 2) Supervisors shall be responsible for ensuring compliance with grooming standards.
4. Female Sworn Employees
  - a. The length, bulk, or appearance of natural hair will not be excessive, ragged, or unkempt.
    - 1) Hair will be neatly groomed and will not hang over the collar.
    - 2) Hair in front will be groomed so that it does not fall below the band of properly worn uniform headgear.
    - 3) The hair may be worn slightly over the ears, but in no case will the bulk or length of the hair interfere with the proper wearing of any authorized headgear.
    - 4) Ponytails or completely plaited hair is unacceptable.



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- b. Hairpieces or wigs worn on duty must conform to the same standards as stipulated for natural hair.
- c. Hair coloring, if used, must appear natural.
- d. No ribbons or ornaments shall be worn in the hair except for neat inconspicuous bobby pins or conservative barrettes.
- e. When worn, cosmetics will be in good taste and natural looking.
  - 1) Eye shadow, false eyelashes, excessive lipstick, and earrings are prohibited.
- f. Buns and French braids will be permitted on top of the head or back of the head, in a neat and attractive manner, provided they do not interfere with the wearing of uniform headgear and do not hang over the collar.

5. Police Communications Operators

- a. Police Communications Operators, male and female, will conform to dress and grooming standards which reflect a professional appearance.

6. Non-uniformed Sworn and Non-Sworn Employees

- a. Non-uniformed civilian employees will conform to dress and grooming standards which reflect a professional appearance.
- b. Sworn employees, who are not, because of their assignment, required to wear the uniform, will dress in a manner which reflects a professional appearance.
  - 1) Grooming standards for these employees will be the same as those for uniformed police employees.
- c. Sworn employees assigned to covert operations will be exempt from grooming dress standards specified for other sworn employees.

**D. Jewelry (22.1.6)**

- 1. Division Commanders may prohibit the wearing of bracelets (excluding medical alert identification) and other jewelry if it detracts from the professional appearance of the employee or constitute a safety hazard.
- 2. Uniformed female employees may wear one matching set of 3mm gold or silver stud earrings.
  - a. Earrings must be centered on the earlobe and have safety backings.
  - b. Male uniformed employees may not wear any earrings while on duty unless assigned to covert capacity.
- 3. Other than described above, no visible body piercings will be permitted.



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Chapter 23 Appearance  
Section 02 Military Courtesy

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Original Policy

## A. General

1. Military courtesy deals mainly with affording correct courtesy and respect to subordinates, fellow workers, and supervisors.
2. Hand Salute - Police employees of this Department, when encountering police officers the rank of Lieutenant and above, wearing the uniform, the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, or Commissioned Officers of the U.S. Armed Forces shall render the proper hand salute.
  - a. When inside the police station an exchange of salutes will be given upon the first encounter of the day. Further saluting throughout the day is not necessary, but may be practiced at the discretion of those involved.
  - b. The exchange of salutes while on patrol between APD officers and officers of other agencies is a fine gesture and the practice should be followed.
  - c. No salute or other acknowledgment will be made when encountering another member who is known to be assigned to investigative or other types of covert operations, unless such member makes an acknowledgment first.
3. The Aberdeen Police Department is a semi-military organization. In keeping with basic military courtesy, the use of the word "sir" or a rank description in general conversation is expected.
4. In general, the chain of command will be followed in dealing with Department matters.



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Chapter 23 Appearance  
Section 03 Courtesy-Public Contact

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Original Policy

## A. Guidelines

1. Few areas generate such a number of complaints as discourtesy.
2. While courtesy may seem minor compared to issues of honesty, use of force and other serious matters, the time and ill-will generated by complaints of discourtesy cannot be overestimated.
3. Practicing courtesy is a way the Department earns respect and support of others.
4. Without the support of Aberdeen residents and officials, it is impossible to attain police goals.
5. Courtesy encourages cooperation and wins respect; discourtesy breeds obstruction and contempt.
6. Nothing which follows means that employees must sacrifice safety or become the passive recipients of endless abuse.
7. It is recognized that employees must occasionally speak sternly to citizens in order to discharge their duties.
8. It is also recognized that some persons may become unruly or complain no matter how much consideration or restraint is shown them.
9. In the final analysis, remember that it is easier and more effective for employees to explain their actions to a member of the public, than it is for a supervisor to try to explain them in the employee's behalf.
10. Probably the easiest way to avoid trouble is to speak to the public and co-workers in the same manner as you would like them to speak to you.

## B. The Value of Explanation

1. Most people are unfamiliar with laws, police work and procedures within the Criminal Justice System.
  - a. The most frequently overlooked courtesy is the simple act of explaining what you are doing.
  - b. When people are ignorant of the reason for police actions, they may assume police employees are acting out of ignorance, arrogance, or whim.
  - c. Such assumptions almost always provoke suspicion, anger, or reduced willingness to cooperate.
2. Occasionally an employee may not be free to explain his actions because to do so might violate a confidence or interfere with a crisis situation.
  - a. These situations should be rare.
  - b. If a citizen asks why the police are in the neighborhood, nothing in this procedure prevents the officer from providing a reason.
  - c. However, the name of victims or complainants should not be provided.
  - d. If there is an emergency situation that prevents the officer from giving a reason, tell the citizen that you will get back to them later, when the situation is concluded.



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Original Policy

- e. **EXAMPLE:** Officers respond to a man with a gun call. A citizen approaches an officer on the perimeter asking, "What's going on?"
  - 1) The officer responds, "get out of here," waiving the citizen away.
  - 2) The citizen may keep asking, and may even come closer to danger.
  - 3) All the officer needed to do is say, "I have a man with a gun call, please leave the area for your safety."
  - 4) Most citizens would immediately clear out of the danger area.
- f. A traffic violator should not be lectured.
  - 1) The officer can explain the violation if the person is at all receptive.
- g. If an officer is asked to act contrary to law or policy, he should not only refuse, but also attempt to explain the law or policy.
- h. Any person who is subjected to a delay, a field interrogation, or a warrant check, should be given an explanation whenever possible.

### C. Listening

1. Active listening is work.
  - a. It calls for patience, avoidance of interruption, and for putting other concerns aside so as to concentrate on what is being expressed by another.
  - b. An employee may do "pretend" listening, while his mind is occupied elsewhere, but few persons will be fooled.
  - c. "Pretend" listening has an element of contempt, because it shows that one person does not value another enough to listen to him.
  - d. Allowing unnecessary interruptions also implies contempt, for the same reason.
2. The complaint most frequently received by any police department is that an employee did not pay someone the courtesy of listening.
  - a. Such complaints will describe an employee's behavior as "cold," "hard," "mean," "arrogant," "uncaring," "obnoxious," and so on.
3. A complainant will say an employee "treated me like a criminal," "refused to listen to me," or "cut me off when I tried to explain."
4. Such complaints come from victims and violators alike. What they all have in common is that the complainant was not actively listened to.
5. It is true that some persons may confuse an explanation with an argument.
  - a. But it is also true that in many cases, the employee simply did not take the time to listen, or felt that listening would be interpreted as weakness.
  - b. While circumstances may not always allow police employees to listen at great length, it is important to remember that time spent listening is usually more productive than time spent talking.
  - c. Whenever possible, police employees both in the station and outside will:
  - d. Actively listen to another's view, without interruption if possible, and,



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- e. Acknowledge that the person has been heard.
  - 1) The best way to show that another has been heard is to re-state the other's point, as in "So you feel you got this ticket because the meter isn't working."
  - 2) It is always possible to listen to, and acknowledge, what is being said, without approving its content or exercising the behavior being discussed.

## D. Procedure

1. Introductions
  - a. Whenever possible, employees are expected to identify themselves by title and name at the start of any public contact.
  - b. Greetings such as "good morning" or "good afternoon" should be included whenever appropriate.
  - c. Remember that greetings are the first and best opportunity to set the tone of any encounter.
  - d. The more cordial (or at least neutral) an encounter is kept, the more the participants can concentrate on the business at hand.
2. Employee Identification
  - a. All Department personnel are issued an official Aberdeen Police Department Identification card that includes their photograph on the card.
  - b. Whenever any person requests to view an officer's identification and badge, the officer will immediately comply.
  - c. Civilian department personnel will show their Department identification, if asked, when they are performing Department business or duties.
3. Tone of Voice
  - a. Too often, tone of voice is left to chance.
  - b. Employees should be aware of voice tone and use it to their advantage, by not betraying sarcasm, contempt, anger or other emotions, which are likely to provoke opposition.
4. Voice Volume
  - a. There are situations, of course, when the voice must be raised.
  - b. However, often the best response to the loud voice of another is a very quiet reply.
  - c. It preserves a clear difference between the behavior of the police employee and the behavior of the person with whom he is dealing.
5. Forms of Address
  - a. Employees should not address citizen by first names unless it is clearly appropriate.
  - b. Nicknames or diminutives such as "Skippy," "Pops," "Junior," etc. are never appropriate.
  - c. Employees are encouraged to use "Mister" and "Ms" whenever a person is addressed by the last name.
  - d. If the last name is not known, employees will use "Sir," "Ma'am," etc.





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6. Body Language

- a. While employees must often assume stances for safety during encounters with the public, care must be taken to avoid needlessly provoking negative reactions, as in gesturing with an ASP or flashlight.
- b. The display of a friendly or at least neutral facial expression is encouraged as an effective way to gain cooperation.

7. Crowding

- a. Most persons are threatened or offended by intrusion into their personal space unless they have consented.
- b. Employees must restrict this practice to, physical arrest, separating opponents, weapons frisk, seizing evidence, or controlling a potential disturbance.
- c. Crowding may only be done for a specific, legitimate reason, not unconsciously or for merely personal reasons.

8. Demeaning Remarks

- a. A remark or form of address that ridicules a citizen or fellow employee, expresses contempt or is calculated to anger is never appropriate.

**E. Provocation by Others**

1. Persons often direct their anger and frustration against police employees, especially victims of crimes, and to reply is a constant temptation.
  - a. However, there is nothing to gain from replying to insults and much to lose.
  - b. It is important to preserve a clear distinction between the proper behavior of employees and the offensive behavior of others.
2. The best way to handle an insult is to either ignore it or point out that you are not insulting them.
  - a. Focus on completing the business at hand. Police are not required to correct merely obnoxious behavior, and it is futile to try.
3. When insulting behavior by a citizen may incite public disturbance or become a challenge to an officer's authority, calm and careful warnings are then appropriate so the citizen has an opportunity to moderate the behavior and avoid arrest.
  - a. This is an important test of an officer's ability to control a situation while controlling himself.
  - b. The officer must not allow emotions to aggravate the situation or become an issue in later court or other proceedings.
  - c. Whether handling a call for service, making an arrest, investigating a crime, or collecting evidence, officer must not allow themselves to be diverted from duty by obnoxious behavior.
  - d. This does not mean the employee must always accept every abuse short of an offense that calls for an arrest.



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- e. If a delay is possible, the employee may elect to break the contact with the offending citizen if he refuses to moderate behavior.
- f. Such actions must be clearly explained to the citizen, as should the means to remedy it.
- g. Also, this does not preclude an officer from arresting a citizen when the obnoxious behavior is not corrected and becomes a breach of the peace.



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Chapter 23 Appearance  
Section 04 Videotaping by the Public

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Original Policy  
Supersedes n/a

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## A. Policy

1. Members of the general public have a First Amendment right to video record, photograph, and/or audio record APD Officers while officers conduct official business or while officers are acting in an official capacity in any public space, unless such recordings interfere with police activity.

## B. Regulations

1. If a person is taking photographs or recording from a place where he or she has a right to be, this activity by itself does not constitute suspicious conduct.
2. In areas open to the public, officers shall allow bystanders the same access for photographing or recording as is given to members of the news media, as long as the bystander has a legal right to be present where he or she is located.
  - a. A bystander has the right under the First Amendment to observe and record officers in the public discharge of their duties.
  - b. Public settings include, e.g., parks, sidewalks, streets, and locations of public protests; but that protection extends also to an individual's home or business, common areas of public and private facilities and buildings, and any other public or private facility at which the individual has a legal right to be present.
  - c. The fact that a bystander has a camera or other recording device does not, however, entitle the bystander to cross a police line, to enter an area that is closed to the public, or to enter any area designated as a crime scene.
3. As long as the photographing or recording takes place in a setting at which the individual has a legal right to be present and does not interfere with a member's safety, members shall not inform or instruct people that photographing or recording of police officers, police activity or individuals who are the subject of police action (such as a Terry stop or an arrest) is not allowed; requires a permit; or requires the member's consent. Additionally, members shall not:
  - a. Order that person to cease such activity;
  - b. Demand that person's identification;
  - c. Demand that the person state a reason why he or she is taking photographs or recording;
  - d. Detain that person;
  - e. Intentionally block or obstruct cameras or recording devices; or
  - f. In any way threaten, intimidate or otherwise discourage an individual from recording members' enforcement activities.

NOTE: Members may ask questions during the course of a contact, but members are reminded that there is no justification for ordering a person to stop or requiring that they answer unless the member reasonably suspects that a person has committed, is committing, or is about to commit any crime.



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4. Members are reminded that the public does not have a right to interfere with police activity. Interference consists of conduct, threats, actions or activities that prevent or hinder, or purport to prevent or hinder, members from doing their job
  - a. If a person is photographing or recording police activity from a position that impedes or interferes with the safety of members or their ability to perform their duties, a member may direct the person to move to a position that will not interfere.
    - 1) However, a member shall not order the person to stop photographing or recording.
  - b. If a person is photographing or recording police activity from a position that impedes or threatens the safety of members of the public, a member shall direct the person to move to a position that will not interfere.
    - 1) However, members shall not order the person to stop photographing or recording.
  - c. A person's recording of members' activity from a safe distance, and absent any attendant action that obstructs the activity or threatens the safety of the member(s), does not constitute interference.
  - d. A person has the right to express criticism of the police activity being observed. So long as that expression does not jeopardize the safety of any member, suspect or bystander; and so long as that expression does not violate the law or incite others to violate the law, the expression does not constitute interference.
5. Evidence on a Camera or Recording Device; Probable Cause
  - a. Probable cause exists where the known facts and circumstances are such that a reasonable member in the same situation would believe that evidence of a crime will be found.
    - 1) See, e.g., United States v. Scott, 987 A.2d 1180, 1191 (D.C. 2010).
  - b. If a member has probable cause to believe that a camera or other recording device contains images or sounds that are evidence of criminal acts, the member shall request that the person either:
    - 1) Voluntarily provide the device or recording medium (e.g., the memory chip) to the member; or
    - 2) Where possible and practicable, and in the presence of the member, voluntarily transmit the images or sound via text message or electronic mail to the member's official government electronic mail account.
    - 3) Consent to take possession of a recording device or medium must be given voluntarily.
      - a) A member shall not, implicitly or explicitly, coerce consent to take possession of any recording device or any information thereon.
  - c. If the person provides the device or recording medium to the member, the member shall:
    - 1) Exercise due care and caution with any of the individual's property or electronic device(s);



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- 2) Obtain Incident Report numbers for the evidence obtained, and provide the IR numbers to the individual;
  - 3) List the individual's property or electronic device in the appropriate "Property listing/Evidence Recovered" section of any police report(s).
  - 4) Document the member's request and the individual's response in the narrative of applicable police reports and other documents; and
  - 5) Submit the device(s) to the Criminal Investigation Division to access any relevant material as quickly as practicable. Members shall not attempt to view, download, or otherwise access any material contained on the device.
- d. If the individual declines to voluntarily provide the device or recording medium, or to electronically transmit the sound and/or images where possible and practicable, and the member believes that exigent circumstances exist insofar as the evidence of criminal activity will be lost absent a seizure of the device, the member shall contact the Lieutenant, Criminal Investigations Division (CID).
- 1) The Lieutenant, CID, or other official with supervisory authority over the member, must be present at the scene before a member takes any significant action involving a person's use of a recording device.
    - a) This includes warrant less search or seizure of a camera or recording device, or an arrest.
  - 2) The member shall inform the Lieutenant, CID, of the nature of the evidence of criminal acts believed to be contained on the device.
  - 3) The Commander, CID, shall, in consultation with the Chief or his designee, determine whether exigent circumstances, including the seriousness of the possible crime at issue, permit the seizure of the device without a warrant.
    - a) Warrant less seizure is permissible only when:
      - i. There is probable cause to believe that the property holds contraband or evidence of a crime; and
      - ii. The exigencies of the circumstances demand it or some other recognized exception to the warrant requirement is present.
  - 4) If the Commander, CID finds that exigent circumstances permit the seizure of the device without a warrant, approval shall be given to the member for the seizure.
  - 5) The member shall obtain and provide IR numbers to the individual possessing the device.
    - a) Any such seizure must be a temporary restraint intended to preserve evidence until a warrant can be obtained. *Illinois v. McArthur*, 531 U.S. 326, 334 (2001).
6. Viewing/Listening to Evidence on a Camera or Recording Device
- a. Absent exigent circumstances, members shall obtain a search warrant before viewing photographs or listening to recordings on a camera or memory chip that has been seized as evidence.



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- b. In exigent circumstances, where there is reason to believe that an immediate search of the seized material is necessary to death or serious injury, members shall contact the Commander, CID, for authorization to review photographs or recordings without a warrant.
  - c. The Commander, CID, in consultation with the Chief or his designee, may authorize such review without a warrant.
  - d. Photographs or recordings that have been seized as evidence and are not directly related to the exigent purpose shall not be reviewed.
7. Members shall not, under any circumstances, erase or delete, or instruct, or require any other person to erase or delete, any recorded images or sounds from any camera or other recording device that is in the possession of a non-member, or that has been voluntarily turned over or seized under the terms of this order.
8. Members shall maintain cameras and other recording devices that are in Department custody so that they can be returned to the owner intact with all images or recordings undisturbed.