

**SAN DIEGO POLICE DEPARTMENT
PROCEDURE**

DATE: NOVEMBER 7, 2023
NUMBER: 5.27
SUBJECT: FACIAL HAIR STANDARDS
RELATED POLICY: N/A
ORIGINATING DIVISION: OPERATIONAL SUPPORT
NEW PROCEDURE:
PROCEDURAL CHANGE:
SUPERSEDES: NEW *PILOT* PROCEDURE

This is deemed as a pilot program, per the Chief of Police. This procedure shall be in place until it is finalized or rescinded. Adherence to this procedure is paramount for a successful evaluation of implementation.

I. PURPOSE

This Department procedure establishes guidelines for uniform and equipment specifications for all sworn and civilian uniformed personnel.

II. SCOPE

This procedure applies to all sworn and non-sworn members of the Department.

III. BACKGROUND

Facial hair procedures were previously referenced in Department Procedure 5.10 and listed in the Uniform Specifications Manual. They have since been transferred to this Department Procedure. The items have been cross-referenced between this procedure and the two other items, for clarity.

IV. DEFINITIONS

Chin Strap Beards - Beards that are trimmed to a thin line along the jawline without a mustache and are less than one inch in height from the bottom of the jawline.

Fit Testing - The use of a protocol to qualitatively or quantitatively evaluate the fit of a respirator on an individual (California Code of Regulations 5144(b)).

Patchy Beards - Beards of uneven or patchy growth.

Reasonable Accommodation – Uniformed personnel who have a reasonable accommodation to wear a beard on file with the Human Resources Department shall conform to the agreed upon standards.

Stubble - Beards shorter than 1/16 inch in length.

V. PROCEDURES

- A. Police Department employees are permitted to wear mustaches, sideburns, and beards while on duty, within the following guidelines. (This includes sworn and non-sworn Department members unless prohibited by assignment via the Commanding Officer of the division or this procedure.)
- B. All facial hair will be worn in a manner that reflects a professional image on the Department while on duty or participating in a Department-authorized event.
- C. Before uniformed Department members choose to grow a beard, an email shall be sent to their immediate supervisor explaining their intention to grow a beard and the start date they intend to do so.
- D. Department members have 30 calendar days from the receipt of the email or the start date indicated on the email, to grow the beard. After that time, the immediate supervisor will confirm the beard meets and does not exceed the guidelines set in this procedure (Section IX).
- E. If the beard is not within the standards set forth in this procedure, the employee shall be advised by their immediate supervisor to shave their beard. If the employee does not comply with the order, the supervisor shall initiate the disciplinary process as outlined in the San Diego Police Department Discipline Manual. The department member shall not be allowed to start the beard-growing process again for at least three months.
- F. The following facial hair is authorized:
 1. Sideburns
 - a. Sideburns shall be trimmed so that they do not extend more than 1/4 inch beyond the bottom of the earlobe and do not flare more than 1/4 inch wider at the bottom than the width of the sideburns.

- b. Sideburns will not be permitted to grow into mustaches in a “mutton chop” fashion. There must be a distinct separation between the mustache and sideburns. The mustache and sideburns shall adhere to the parameters set forth in this procedure.
2. Mustaches
- a. Mustaches shall be kept neatly trimmed and well-groomed. They shall not extend more than 1/4 inch beyond or below the corner of the mouth and shall not be waxed.
3. Beards
- a. Beards shall be well maintained.
 - b. Beards shall have distinct cheeks and necklines and connect with the mustache, encircling the mouth and chin area.
 - c. The beard hair shall not exceed 1/8 inch in length.
 - d. The beard shall not grow below the Adam’s Apple portion of the neck.
 - e. Patchy or spotty clumps of facial hair are not permitted.
 - f. Superfluous hairs outside of the beard area shall be removed.
- G. The shaving, waxing, plucking or otherwise removal from the beard for the purpose of aesthetic grooming (shaping, pencil-thin trimming, designer beard, “chin strap” beard, stubble, etc.), other cosmetic effects, or patchy beards is prohibited.
- H. No insignias, ID numbers or other designs are authorized to be present in any facial hair, without express written permission from the Chief of Police.
- I. The following employee positions are NOT authorized to wear a beard without a Reasonable Accommodation:
- 1. Command Staff personnel (Lieutenants and higher)
 - 2. Probationary police officers, including Police Recruits.
 - 3. Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) personnel, including Primary Response Team members and Special Response Canine (SRC) members.
 - 4. Honor Guard personnel

5. Academy Training Unit personnel
6. Recruiting personnel

VI. EXEMPTIONS

- A. Department personnel assigned to specialized investigative units shall be exempt from the standards in this procedure if authorized by the Chief of Police.
 1. Units may also be exempted from the Fit Testing requirement if authorized by the Chief of Police. If authorized to be exempted from Fit Testing, the personnel shall return their Air Purifying Respirators/gas masks to the Critical Incident Management Unit for the duration of their assignment. A gas mask shall be reissued when returning to duty or an assignment that no longer requires the exemption.
- B. Non-sworn Department members who do not don uniforms as part of their duties are exempted from the length regulations of this procedure. However, these Department members shall keep their facial hair clean and well-groomed at all times.

VII. REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

- A. Officers who have a reasonable accommodation to wear a beard outside of these procedures shall be on file with the Human Resources Department and shall conform to the following standards:
 1. The beard shall be neatly groomed, uniform, and professional in appearance.
 2. The beard hair should be cut as close to the skin as possible without causing irritation and shall not exceed a maximum length of ½ inch in length.
 3. No insignias, ID numbers or other designs are authorized to be present in any facial hair, without express written permission from the Chief of Police.

**VIII. FACIAL HAIR AND THE USE OF AIR PURIFYING RESPIRATORS (APRs)/
GAS MASKS**

- A. Air Purifying Respirators (APR - also known as gas masks) are a necessary piece of safety equipment used to protect sworn Department personnel when exposed to

chemical agent environments such as OC (Oleoresin Capsicum) and CS (Corson and Stoughton) gases.

- B. CAL OSHA regulations govern the use of APRs for employees in California. The California Code of Regulations, Title 8, Section 5144 (f) requires annual APR fit testing for all personnel who are issued an APR. Section 5144 (g) prohibits any facial hair growth along the area of the face where the APR normally provides a seal.
- C. Department members that are required to utilize APRs as part of their duties, and that have facial hair that comes between the sealing surface of the facepiece and the face or that interferes with valve function; or any condition that interferes with the face-to-facepiece seal or valve function, shall shave those areas, prior to donning an APR.
- D. APRs include three types of deployments
 - 1. Annual Respiratory Protection Program (ARRP) Fit Testing

See the Uniform Specifications Manual - Air Purifying Respirators (APRs)/Gas Masks (Section XIX) for further instructions regarding Fit Testing procedures.
 - 2. Emergency APR Deployments
 - a. It may be necessary for sworn Department personnel to don an APR as part of an operation where a chemical agent environment is expected.
 - 3. Training APR Deployments
 - a. Personnel may be required to don an APR during scheduled training.
- E. All Department members who choose to wear a beard shall be required to possess an emergency shaving kit, including water, shave gel or foam, and an adequate razor blade and cloth to shave properly. This kit shall be placed with or near their APR, in case of emergency deployment.
 - 1. This kit shall be furnished by the Department member.
- F. For personnel called to perform a task for which the department requires a clean-shaven appearance or the donning of an APR, the Department member shall shave prior to reporting for duty, or in an emergency deployment the Department member shall shave immediately and will have to reinitiate the process to regrow the beard, which can occur after the emergency for which the beard was shaved has ceased.

See the Uniform Specifications Manual - Air Purifying Respirators (APRs)/Gas Masks (Section XIX) for further instructions and details.

IX. SUPERVISOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Supervisor's shall ensure they monitor their employees for unauthorized facial hair growth, in accordance with Department inspection standards.
 - 1. Supervisors shall ensure that personnel are conforming to OSHA regulations.

- B. When uniformed Department personnel notify the supervisor via email about their intention to grow a beard, the supervisor shall forward that email through their chain of command.

- C. The notified supervisor shall respond to the email and set an appointment with the employee to inspect the beard 30 calendar days after the start date indicated in the email.
 - 1. A copy of this procedure will be attached to the email response and will require the employee to confirm their understanding of the responsibilities under this procedure in a responding email.
 - 2. This follow-up email will also be forwarded through the supervisor's chain of command.

- D. After 30 calendar days, the supervisor shall ensure the beard is within the standards set forth in this procedure. If the standards have not been met, the supervisor shall notify the employee to shave their beard by the next working day of the employee. If the employee does not comply with the order, the supervisor shall initiate the disciplinary process as outlined in the San Diego Police Department Discipline Manual.