



**CITY OF VISALIA PERSONNEL POLICY**  
**Policy #126**  
**Appearance Standards**

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**I. PURPOSE**

The City of Visalia is a professional organization. All employees will present a professional appearance in order to promote a positive image. The general public frequently forms its initial impression of professional credibility solely on employee appearance. The appropriateness of attire and appearance has a bearing on how other agencies and departments view employee professionalism and ultimately working relationships.

This policy applies to all employees, regardless of classification or employment status, and is consistent with community standards. Individual departments may have more specific policies in place based on need.

This policy is intended to provide guidelines on dress and appearance and is not meant to address all situations. There may be differences in some department or division dress guidelines depending on the nature of the work environment, nature of work performed, involvement with the public, required uniforms or other circumstances as defined by the department head. The standards in this policy apply when an employee has officially reported to work or is representing the City.

**II. POLICY**

The City of Visalia maintains a business casual working environment. All employees should use discretion in wearing attire that is appropriate for the work environment and customer interaction. Because of varied work assignments and working conditions, it is not practical to establish specific and absolute criteria as to what is, or is not, appropriate appearance in all situations. Consistent with this policy, exceptions to the dress standards can be made at the department level by the Department Head due to the nature of work, special events, casual Fridays and departmental clean-up days. The following are standards.

**A. Clothing**

1. Employees who wear uniforms are expected to report for duty in the departmentally assigned uniform. Uniforms are expected to be clean and neat. Additional standards may be communicated at the departmental level or in bargaining unit MOU's.
2. Employees who are not required to wear uniforms are expected to wear business clothing appropriate to the position held. Attire is expected to be clean, neat, and well fitting.
3. Except as noted or approved by the department head, employees may not wear the following:
  - a. Denim jeans of any color.
  - b. Shorts of any type.
  - c. Clothing with foul language or obscene images.
  - d. Gym or sweat pants, workout wear, uncovered spandex pants/leggings.



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- e. Shirts or dresses with spaghetti straps unless covered by an outer garment; shirts that expose stomach or midriff area or are see-through; halter or tube tops.
- f. Low cut (front or back) attire.

This list is an example only and may not include all items deemed inappropriate.

**B. Footwear and Headwear**

- 1. All footwear is expected to be appropriate to the employee's position and work required. Shoes are to be neat, clean and in good repair. Shoes must not create a safety hazard.
- 2. No bandanas or hats are allowed except as approved by the department head.

**C. Tattoos, Piercings, and Ornamentation**

Except as noted or approved by the City Manager:

- 1. Tattoos on the head, neck, and face except for cosmetic tattoos in the form of permanent make-up, must be covered while on duty or while representing the City.
- 2. Tattoos on the hands except for a ring style tattoo on the ring finger, must be covered while on duty and/or while representing the City. This provision only applies to employees working in a public office setting, or who have frequent public contact, or who are providing medical services.
- 3. Visible tattoos, regardless of location, shall not contain language or images that are obscene, sexually explicit, derogatory on the basis of gender, race, religion, national origin, age, marital status, sexual orientation or other protected status; violent; drug/alcohol-related; extremist; or gang-related. Visible non-conforming tattoos must be covered by clothing, bandage, or makeup.
- 4. No objects, articles, jewelry, gauges, or ornamentation of any kind shall be attached to or through the skin if visible on any body part. The only exceptions are earrings attached to the ear.
- 5. Any visible non-conforming piercing shall be removed whenever possible. If removal is not possible, the non-conforming piercing must be covered with a bandage or clothing, or replaced with flesh-colored spacer.
- 6. No piercing shall be worn if it jeopardizes the safety of employees, vendors, or the public.

**D. Personal Hygiene/Grooming**

- 1. Personal hygiene is essential; therefore, it is necessary that all employees maintain a clean, presentable, and professional appearance.



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2. Strong odors caused by perfumes, scented hair sprays, and aftershave lotions can be offensive and are to be used in moderation out of concern for the comfort of others.
3. Hair, including facial hair, must be neat, clean and well-groomed and not extreme in color.

**III. RESPONSIBILITY**

- A. This guidance is given to assure that City employees present a professional appearance and the work environment is free of harassment and discrimination. If an employee has a question about how the policy is applicable to him/her, the matter should be immediately raised with his/ her supervisor for clarification.
  - B. Supervisors are responsible for explaining and enforcing the standards outlined in this policy, and employees are responsible for adhering to the standards.
  - C. An employee's religious beliefs or medical conditions, as defined by applicable law, that require deviation from the standards as set forth will be considered on an individual basis by the Human Resources Division in consultation with the department.
  - D. Failure to comply with, and repeated violations of this policy will be cause for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
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