



U.S. Customs and  
Border Protection

OBP 10/13-C

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MEMORANDUM FOR: All Chief Patrol Agents  
All Division Chiefs

FROM:

*David V. Aguilar*  
David V. Aguilar  
Chief  
U.S. Border Patrol

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David V. Aguilar", written over a horizontal line.

SUBJECT: Interim Guidance on Grooming Standards and Personal  
Appearance

In this period of unprecedented growth, it is imperative that Border Patrol agents maintain a professional image at all times while in uniform and interacting with the public. Although an updated uniform policy is forthcoming, I feel it is necessary to reiterate and define the current standards regarding grooming, jewelry, and tattoos. When the uniform policy was last negotiated, many of today's issues were not relevant. Although these issues have become mainstream and socially acceptable, I do not feel they are professionally acceptable and do not portray the professional image that a Federal law enforcement agency should adhere to.

Article 25 of the negotiated Collective Bargaining Agreement (dated February 6, 1995) reserves management's right to determine under what circumstances the official uniform will be worn. The Border Patrol Handbook, M-68, dated April 1, 1985, also addresses issues regarding Personal Appearance and Grooming Standards. I would like to remind all agents of how these standards are defined and what we expect from our agents and employees.

#### Grooming Standards

- Agents may wear no more than a total of three (3) rings. Wedding rings (wedding band, engagement ring and/or wedding/ engagement ring combination) are authorized for wear.
- Any necklace, medallion, or chain that is worn shall not be visible while wearing the Border Patrol uniform. Choker-type necklaces are not authorized.
- Females are authorized to wear no more than one (1) button or post-type earring in each ear.

- Border Patrol agents are prohibited from attaching, affixing, or displaying objects, articles, jewelry, or ornamentation to or through the ear, nose, tongue, eye brows, lips, or any exposed or visible part of the body while in uniform (except as noted above).
- Agents are prohibited from wearing bracelets (other than medical alert bracelets) while in uniform. Conservative or military-style watches are authorized for wear. Watchbands will be limited to silver, gold, black, brown, dark blue, and dark green in color.

#### Personal Appearance

- Chief Patrol Agents shall require that all tattoos and/or brandings be covered (to the extent possible) while on duty. Agents who have a tattoo in a location on the body where a uniform item is not available will be required to submit a memorandum through the chain of command explaining the situation and requesting a waiver and/or remedy.
- Intentional body alterations (tongue-forking, tooth-filing, disfiguring implants, etc.) are prohibited.
- Grooming standards pertaining to employees who are authorized to wear civilian or plain clothes attire shall be set by the appropriate Chief Patrol Agent.
- The use of gold, platinum, or other veneers or caps for the purpose of dental ornamentation is prohibited. Teeth, whether natural, capped, or veneered, will not be ornamented with designs, jewels, initials, etc.

Staff may direct questions to Associate Chief Woody Lee at (202) 344-1457 or (A) Assistant Chief Derek Mason at (202) 344-3067.