

BULLET BACKGROUND PAPER

ON

WOMEN'S GROOMING STANDARDS IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE (RFI 9)

TOP LINE MESSAGE

- The Air Force continuously reviews dress and personal appearance standards to ensure they reflect the professionalism and diversity of our team
- All Airmen have an opportunity to submit uniform and appearance standards change requests via our Airmen Powered by Innovation Program
- The Air Force Uniform Office is not aware of any anecdotal data related to adverse health impacts of current grooming standards at this time

PURPOSE: Provide the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS) information on women's grooming standards

BACKGROUND:

- Air Force Instruction, 36-2903, *Dress and Personal Appearance of Air Force Personnel*, Chapter 3 addresses women's grooming standards

DISCUSSION:

- May 2017, Air Force Uniform Board, removed minimum ¼ inch hair length standard, increased bulk standard from 3 to 3.5 inches, authorized locs as an acceptable hairstyle, & authorized black color hair accessories for all hair colors

- Women's hair will end above the bottom edge of uniform collar; bangs, or side-swiped hair will *not* touch eyebrows

-- Locs, braids, twists, micro-braids, french braids, dutch braids, pony tails and cornrows are authorized

-- Authorized hair accessories (color of hair or black) include fabric scrunchies, hairpins, combs, clips, headbands, elastic bands, barrettes, etc.

-- Long hair must be secured but, may have loose ends that extend below the collar in physical training gear

-- Wigs, hairpieces, and extensions are authorized and will meet the same standard required for natural hair

- Commander's may authorize cancer patients to wear approved caps (black/tan) due to a temporary medical condition (i.e., radiation/chemotherapy)

RECOMMENDATIONS: None, for information only