



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
PERMANENT MARINE CORPS UNIFORM BOARD  
2076 SOUTH ST  
QUANTICO VA 22134

In reply refer to:  
1020  
MCUB  
15 Jan 20

PROGRAM MANAGER, MARINE CORPS UNIFORM BOARD COMMENTS on 2020-  
MRA\_MP\_MPE-135

Subj: **DACOWITS MARCH 2020 REQUEST FOR INFORMATION QUARTERLY BUSINESS MEETING**

Ref: (a) DACOWITS RFIs for March 2020 (RFI #11)  
(b) Excerpt from MCO 1020.34H; Marine Corps Uniform Regulations

1. Reference (a) has been reviewed and the below information is provided in response.

a. Reference (b) is provided for review. As detailed in the reference, female Marine hairstyles are divided into three hair lengths (short, medium and long), and Marines are required to style their hair in compliance with those regulations. Marines with long hair are not limited to styling their hair in tight buns. That is a personal preference, and can lead to hair loss. As long as the Marine styles her hair within the prescribed regulations, the style provides and neat and professional appearance and does not interfere with the proper wear of required headgear, she has multiple styles to choose from, at the various lengths.

a. Female Marine recruits are provided several grooming classes, to include multiple classes dedicated to hairstyling, throughout the training cycle, usually in the squad bay, by the senior drill instructor based off the existing Marine Corps Uniform Regulations. The classes address grooming standards in regards to acceptable cosmetics, manicures, hairstyles and also include health and hygiene classes. Hair products used in Boot Camp are different than what they use when they get to the Fleet and have an opportunity to experiment with other hair products - to determine which one will work better for that individual's hair. They are also taught that hairstyles have to be adjusted based off the event/evolution/deployment they are participating as well as the uniform and headgear they are wearing.

b. The squad bay setting currently being utilized promotes discussion, demonstration and practical application (of several different long hair styles, not just the "Marine bun"), based off the specific needs of the recruits and the personal experience of the drill instructors. If the drill instructors of a particular series

Subj: **DACOWITS MARCH 2020 REQUEST FOR INFORMATION QUARTERLY BUSINESS MEETING**

cannot fully meet the needs of all the recruits, then [TSV1]drill instructors are brought from other series to address those needs. Recruits are educated on different hair length style requirements and are provided demonstrations and practical application based off their needs and preferences. While they have limited access to styling products at Boot Camp, they are encouraged to communicate with their families to send the products that will make it easier to achieve their chosen hairstyle. Unlike male recruits, who all have their hair shaved to zero length upon arrival to Boot Camp, female recruits are allowed to maintain their hair at their desired length as long as it is styled within the standards detailed in the Uniform Regulations. The grooming classes are provided several times throughout the training cycle and individually as needed.

c. Female drill instructors are providing the grooming classes based off the Uniform Regulations and their own personal experience. Recruits are being told by the drill instructors the hazards associated with long term use of certain products and hairstyles (e.g. baldness where hair is pulled tight). This is all anecdotal information garnered by the individual drill instructors personal experiences, not based on medical studies. Recruits are told to use parts and to move the parts around as a way to avoid the long term hair loss.

2. The point of contact is Mary Boyt Shapleigh at [mary.boyt@usmcu.edu](mailto:mary.boyt@usmcu.edu) or 703.784.6889.

  
MARY BOYT SHAPLEIGH

RFI 11 FOR DACOWITS MARCH 2020 QUARTERLY MEETING

**EFFECT OF GROOMING STANDARDS ON WOMEN'S HEALTH (WB&T)**

The Military Services' written responses to the December 2019 RFI acknowledged awareness of alopecia possibilities and some reported incidence of alopecia among servicewomen, but they do not track or monitor this condition or other hairstyle-related conditions.

- 11 The Committee requests a **written response** from the **Military Services** describing what and how female recruits are taught to style their hair, to ensure compliance with Service hair grooming standards, specifically those styles which entail pulling or twisting hair into "up-do" or "pull back" styles. The Committee is particularly interested in how servicewomen are taught to achieve the following hair styles: buns, ponytails, and braids.
- a. Please provide copies of instructional materials, curricula, videos or other media used to demonstrate and teach servicewomen how to achieve these and any other styles which require pulling or twisting the hair.
  - b. If "how to" styling demonstrations are used to train, please provide the Committee video demonstration of this training.
  - c. Are servicewomen specifically, and Service members generally (particularly supervisors/commanders), educated about the potential harm resulting from hairstyles that excessively pull/twist hair and, if so, how?
  - d. Although Service grooming standards do not require "tight" pulling of the hair or "tight buns," Committee members have observed many servicewomen who do wear such hairstyles. Is there any unit practice or encouragement to achieve a more professional looking appearance by employing this styling technique?
  - e. The Coast Guard advised, in its December RFI response, that its Uniform Board recently recommended revisions to female grooming standards based on information it had received about the adverse medical effects (i.e., headaches and permanent hair loss) of "repeated pulling of the hair to form ponytails or pulled back hairstyles." To assist the Committee in its study of this matter, we request the Coast Guard provide information about the proposed changes.

## EXCERPT FROM MCO 1020.34H; FEMALE GROOMING REGULATIONS

Paragraph 1004.7.b (changes in blue are approved and pending publication)

b. Female Grooming Regulations. Women will be well groomed at all times and will abide by the following:

(1) Hair Regulations. The requirement for hair regulations is to provide direction for maintaining a neat and professional military image. Women's hairstyles require non-eccentric and non-faddish styles, maintaining a conservative, professional appearance. For the purpose of these regulations, women's hairstyles will be organized into three basic categories: short length, medium length and long hair.

(a) Hair Length (See Figure 1-3)

1. Short Hair Length. Short hair is defined as hair length that extends no more than 1 inch from the scalp (excluding bangs). Overall hair bulk may be cut no shorter than 1/4 inch from the scalp; except that it may be evenly graduated from zero at the hairline at the nape of the neck to the maximum length of 1 inch within two inches of the hairline/neckline (creating a fade). Bangs, if worn, may not fall into the line of sight, may not interfere with the wear of all headgear, and when worn with headgear must lie neatly against the head. The width of the bangs may not extend beyond the hairline at the temples.

2. Medium Hair Length. Medium hair is defined as hair that does not extend beyond the **back of the collar's** lower edge (in all uniforms), and extends more than 1 inch from the scalp. Medium hair may fall naturally in uniform and is not required to be secured. Graduated hair styles are acceptable, but the change in length, from the front to the back, may not exceed a one inch difference in length (see Figure 1-3). The regulations for the wear of bangs detailed in the short hair length section apply to medium length hair as well. No portion of the bulk of the hair as measured from the scalp will exceed 2 inches (see Figure 1-3).

3. Long Hair. Long hair is defined as hair that extends beyond the collar's lower edge. When styled, long hair will be secured up so that it does not extend beyond the collar's lower edge, except in the physical training uniform. Long hair will be neatly and inconspicuously fastened or pinned, except that bangs may be worn. The regulations for the wear of bangs detailed in the short hair length section are relevant. No portion of the bulk of the hair, as measured from the scalp, will exceed 2 inches (except a bun, which may extend to a maximum of 3 inches from the scalp and may be no wider than the width of the head). **Marines are authorized to shave hair that extends below the hairline that cannot be pulled up into a bun.**

(b) Hairstyles. Hair will be styled so as not to interfere with the proper wear of all uniform headgear. All headgear will fit snugly and

Reference (b)

comfortably around the largest part of the head without distortion or excessive gaps. When headgear is worn, hair should not protrude at distinct angles from under the edges. Hairstyles which do not allow the headgear to be worn in this manner are prohibited. Faddish and exaggerated styles to include shaved portions (other than the fade authorized for short hair and shaved hair that extends below the hairline for long hair), designs cut in the hair, unsecured ponytails (except during physical training as detailed below), asymmetrical (unbalanced or lopsided) haircut/hairstyles, and locks, twists and multiple braids that exceed the size and style guidelines established below, are prohibited. Examples of hairstyles considered to be faddish or exaggerated and thus not authorized for wear in uniform are (this list is not all-inclusive): hair sculpting (eccentric directional flow, texture or spiking), hair styles with severe angles, and loose unsecured hair (not to include bangs) when medium or long hair is worn up.

(c) Braids, Twists and Locks

1. Braids. A braid is defined as three or more sections of interlaced hair. Braids may only be worn with medium and long length hair. One and two braids (e.g. French braid) hairstyles are authorized, as long as the braid(s) provides a neat and professional military appearance and does not interfere with the proper wear of all headgear. More than two braids are considered multiple braids, and the guidance provided below applies. When extensions are worn, braids may continue to the end of the natural hair and can be worn loose from that point (i.e. partial multiple braids), but must be secured/worn up per long hair regulations.

2. Twists. A twist is defined as two sections of hair twisted together, which forms a rope or cord-like appearance. Twists may only be worn with medium, and long length hair. One and two twists (e.g. French twist) hairstyles are authorized, as long as the twist(s) provides a neat and professional military appearance, does not interfere with the proper wear of all headgear. More than two twists are considered multiple twists and the guidance provided below applies.

3. Locks. A lock is defined as one section of hair that twists from or near the root to the ends of the hair, which creates a uniform ringlet or cordlike appearance. Locks may be worn with short, medium and long length hair. Lock partings are required to be square or rectangular in shape in order to achieve a neat and professional military appearance. Several techniques can be used to achieve this style; however, the overall appearance is subject to the parameters provided below.

4. Braid, Twists and Lock Detailed Guidance. Braid, twist, locks hairstyles must encompass the whole head (with the exception of bangs).

a. Secured Braids and Twists. Only braids and twists may be "secured" to the scalp (hair is continually added to the braid or twist as it continues from the hairline to hairline at the nape of the neck), and will follow the contour of the head from front to nape in one direction. An off

Reference (b)

center part or place of origin is authorized. When worn secured, individual braids and twists will be no more than 3/8 inch in diameter, and will be tightly interlaced/twisted to present a neat, professional military appearance.

b. Free-hanging Braids, Twists and Locks. Free-hanging (attached to the scalp at one location only) braids, twists and locks are authorized. When worn, each individual braid, twist or lock will be no more than 3/8 inch in diameter and will be tightly interlaced/twisted to present a neat, professional military appearance.

c. New Growth/Maintenance of Braids, Twists and Locks. New growth (defined as hair that naturally grows from the scalp and has not yet been braided, twisted or locked) will not exceed 1/2 inch at any time. Braids, twists and locks that do not meet these standards and do not present a neat and professional military appearance are not authorized.

d. Foreign Material. Foreign material shall not be incorporated into or attached to the hair (except hair extensions and accessories, as detailed below).

(d) Hair Extensions. Hair extensions that achieve short, medium and long hair lengths are authorized. Extensions must present a natural appearance and conform to all hair regulations.

(e) Wigs. Wigs, if worn in uniform, must look natural and conform to the above regulations.

(f) Physical Training (PT). Medium/long length hair may be worn down (in a ponytail or braid) for organized PT, except for events considered combat training when wearing the MCCUU coat (for long hair), or when considered a safety hazard. Half ponytails (see figure 1-3\_ that provide a neat and professional military appearance are authorized for medium hair length only for PT purposes (commanders will designate what is considered a PT event). Half ponytails must lie flat, and cannot result in hair standing straight up or at extreme angles from the head. To clarify, long hair may not be worn loose in any uniform, and for PT events must be secured in a ponytail, free-hanging braid or worn up, as dictated by the commander, except as indicated below.

1. MCCUU with the coat for PT evolutions. When the MCCUU coat is worn, including PT purposes, long hair will be worn properly secured up per non-PT hairstyle regulations (coat on, long hair up). Medium length hair may be worn in a half ponytail for PT activities when the MCCUU coat is worn. Half ponytails will not be worn with the MCCUU when in a non-PT status, and may not be worn when Marine Corps headgear is worn.

2. Boots and Utilities (Boots and Utes). When wearing boots and utes in a PT environment, hair should be secured using the PT guidelines identified above. If boots and utes are worn for non-PT related activities, the hair must be worn/secured up per non-PT hairstyle regulations..."

g. Hair Accessories. Inconspicuous hairpins and bobby pins, if

Reference (b)

required, are authorized. Hairnets will not be worn unless inconspicuous or authorized for a specific type of duty. Barrettes, combs, rubber bands, etc. are authorized, if concealed by the hair and are consistent with the hair color. Headbands, alligator clips, and bows are not authorized.

h. Hair Color. If applied, dyes, tints, bleaches and frostings, which result in natural colors, are authorized. The hair color must complement the person's complexion tone. Color changes that detract from a professional image are prohibited.

i. Body Hair. No female Marine will be required to remove body hair except where leg hair protrudes beyond the appropriate hosiery per subparagraph 3027.5, or causes a visibly uneven texture under said hosiery.

(2) Cosmetics. Cosmetics, if worn, will be applied conservatively and will complement the individual's complexion tone. Exaggerated or faddish cosmetic styles are inappropriate with the uniform and will not be worn.

(a) Fingernails. Nail length will be no longer than 1/4 inch from the tip of the finger.

1. Fingernail Polish In Service and Dress Uniforms. When worn, fingernail polish must be in shades of red (within the red spectrum, to include pinks and burgundies) and must complement the skin tone. Fingernails with multiple colors (except as mentioned in paragraph 1004.7.b(1)(c)1.c) and decorative ornamentation are prohibited.

2. Fingernail Polish In Utilities. Colored fingernail polish (to include nude polish) is not authorized for wear with the utility uniform (except as mentioned in paragraph 1004.7.b(1)(c)1.c).

3. Manicures. Manicures that imitate the natural nail are authorized for wear with all uniforms (i.e. French manicures), to include utilities, but must have the "natural nail" appearance, to include the clearly defined white/beige nail tip. Press-on and acrylic nails are authorized for wear as long as they are maintained within the length and style regulations as per regulations detailed above.

(b) Lipstick. Lipstick, lip gloss and lip balm must be in shades of red (within the red spectrum, to include pinks and burgundies) or clear and must complement the skin tone. When worn, lip liner must be in the same shade as the lipstick, gloss or balm.

(c) Other Make-Up. Mascara, when worn, must be in tones of black or brown. Cosmetics with a sparkle/glitter or similar finish are not authorized for wear (to include in the hair). False eyelashes should be natural in appearance.

(d) Reserve Marines. Members of Marine Corps Reserve will comply with these regulations during periods of active or reserve duty.

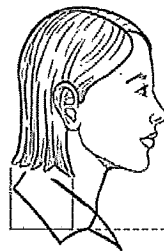
Reference (b)

Longest hair – 1 inch from scalp, shortest hair is 1/4 inch, except a “zero fade” may be worn at the hairline (for up to 2 inches) at the back of the head only (no zero fades on the sides).

Bottom Edge of the Back of Collar



Short Hair Length

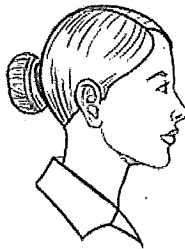


Medium Hair Length

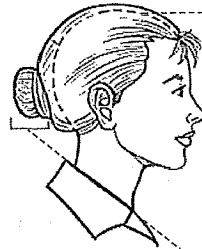
Less than 1 inch difference in hair length from front to back. Bobs (front and back) may not extend below the bottom edge of the back of the collar.

Bottom of bun must remain above the bottom edge of the collar.

For long hair, the area below the hairline at the back of the head may be shaved.



Long Hair Length



Scalp  
Bulk of hair limitations from the scalp is a maximum of 2 inches.

Maximum bun size (as it extends from the scalp) is 3 inches deep, and no wider than the head.

Bulk of Hair/  
Bun Limits

The section of hair pulled back into the half ponytail should be secured over the “crest of the head.” The half ponytail must lay flat and hair may not stick straight out or at extreme angles from the head.



Half Pony Tail (for PT Purposes Only, Medium Hair Length)

Figure 1-3.--Female hair length.

Reference. (b)