



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
HEADQUARTERS AIR COMBAT COMMAND  
JOINT BASE LANGLEY-EUSTIS VA

OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER  
205 DODD BOULEVARD SUITE 200  
JOINT BASE LANGLEY-EUSTIS VA 23665-2788

AUG 27 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR AIR FORCE UNIFORM BOARD  
ATT: LT GEN BRIAN KELLY

SUBJECT: Support for Air Force Policy Hair Reform

1. *Don't miss this opportunity to change Air Force hair policy!* The current female hair policy standards negatively affect the operational readiness, training environments, medical readiness, and culture of inclusion for our Total Force Airmen. I am urging Air Force policy owners of hair standards to implement change that accommodates all genders, ethnicities, and backgrounds, while encouraging leaders to continue to foster a community of inclusiveness.
2. Currently, there is limited guidance within AFI 36-2903, *Dress and Personal Appearance of Air Force Personnel* to allow the functional and safe fit of equipment for female Airmen. This equipment includes M50 chemical masks, flight helmets, night vision goggles, plate carriers, ballistic helmets, virtual reality goggles, and cold weather personal protective equipment. The current hair standards are also causing health issues such as traction alopecia, migraines, and mildewed/moldy hair. These standards are not inclusive of all ethnicities or hair types and negatively impact an Air Force culture that values diversity and inclusion. The Air Force has a diverse workforce that requires diverse hair options.
3. I am in full support of the changes being requested by Air Combat Command's Sword Athena – Mission Area Working Group on hair policy reform, in partnership with the Air Force Women's Initiative Team and Warrior Braids Group. Allowing our female airmen to wear a single braid, dual braids, or a ponytail that extends past the collar, but no longer than the elbow, will help alleviate the challenges being faced by our servicewomen. The Air Force Safety Center has reviewed the proposed hair changes and deemed associated risks as manageable within current safety policies. Female Airmen exposed to hazards related to this change will be required to follow the safety precautions outlined in AFMAN 91-203, paragraph 14.4.5.4. This standard currently exists as a gender neutral requirement and is therefore applicable to all workers.
4. For far too long, servicewomen have been subject to unconscious bias of what professional hair should look like in uniform; this has created operational risks and medical issues. These risks should be mitigated immediately by taking an unbiased look at current hair policy, and revising it to meet the needs of our modern and diverse servicewomen.

JAMES M. HOLMES  
General, USAF  
Commander, Air Combat Command

- 3 Attachments:
1. AF Form 847
  2. AF Form 847 "Changes to Read"
  3. Safety Analysis for Proposed Hair Standards Change BBP

*People First... Mission Always...*