

Blount County Government



MEMORANDUM

To: Blount County HR Committee

From: Misty Guge & Jaclyn Johnson, HR

Date: July 15, 2026

Subject: Proposed Updates to the Blount County Government Employee Handbook

We are bringing forward two proposed updates to the Employee Handbook for the HR Committees review and recommendation to the full Commission.

The first relates to the Title VI complaint process. The Tennessee Department of Human Services has updated the available options for individuals wishing to file a title VI complaint. To ensure our handbook reflects the most current information, we are proposing an update to clarify that individuals may file a title VI complaint through any of the following avenues:

- Human Resources
- The Tennessee Department of Human Services; or
- The US Department of Justice Civil Rights Division

Updating this section will help ensure employees are aware of their rights and have clear information regarding the available complaint procedures.

The second update relates to the current appearance policy. Currently, visible tattoos are generally prohibited, and piercings are limited to the ears. We are proposing a revision to better align with evolving workplace standards while continuing to maintain expectations for professionalism and safety. Under the proposed change, visible tattoos would be permitted as long as they are not offensive, inappropriate, or inconsistent with a professional workplace environment. Tasteful facial and body piercings would be allowed, provided they do not pose a safety risk or interfere with an employee's ability to perform their job duties.

This update provides a more current approach to employee appearance standards while continuing to support a professional and safe work environment.

These revisions have been incorporated into the proposed Employee Handbook. We respectfully request the HR Committee's approval and recommendation for the updated handbook to be forwarded to the full Commission for final approval.

Updated handbook language:

**State of TN Required updates to Title VI regarding complaints –*

To report any complaints or to receive additional information about Title VI, contact the Title VI Coordinator, Misty Guge, at 865-273-5780 or via email at mguge@blounttn.gov. Complaints must be received in writing and signed by the complainant. Please email complaints to the email above or mail to:

Blount County Human Resources
Attn: Misty Guge, Title VI Coordinator
397 Court Street
Maryville, TN 37804

Complainants may also file complaints with the State of Tennessee.

Title VI Complaint Filing Information

Tennessee Department of Human Resources
Office of Strategic Support – Legal Compliance Division
Title VI Compliance Program
William Snodgrass Tennessee Tower
312 Rosa L. Parks Avenue, 17th Floor
Nashville, Tennessee 37243

Right to File with Federal Agencies

Complainants also have the right to file directly with the appropriate federal funding agency or with the United States Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division.

Grooming Standards

- Hair should be neat and clean
- Hair length, style and color should be appropriate for your job
 - Any hair style which projects an unprofessional appearance should not be worn while working
- Facial hair should be clean and neatly trimmed
- Jewelry should be appropriate for work setting, convey a professional appearance and should not be excessive. Tasteful facial and body piercings are permitted, provided they do not pose safety risks or interfere with job performance.
- Refrain from wearing perfumes or using lotions with a strong odor which could be offensive to coworkers.
- Visible tattoos must be professional, appropriate, and non-offensive. Tattoos that display profanity, violence, nudity, sexual content, or promote discrimination, hate speech, or gang affiliation are strictly prohibited. Employees may be required to cover inappropriate tattoos while on shift.