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(B)OCU or Unit, Directorate	Data Office
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Dress Code Policy

Introduction

Important

This information is Met policy. Anyone who works for the Met, including contractors and volunteers, must comply with it.

If you're a line manager, you're responsible for settling disputes about dress code at B/OCU level, referring to the Modes of Dress – Uniform Appearance policy.

General appearance

- You should look professional, clean and neat at work and in all situations where you're representing the Met.
- Your clothing should suit the work you're doing and be health and safety compliant.
- If you're challenged on your appearance by a supervisor, take steps to address it.
- We don't have 'dress down' days at the Met. Clothing definitions have been added below for ease of reference.
- Don't chew gum or smoke when dealing with members of the public or in public view.

Smart business attire is the default for non-uniform officers and staff

Standards of dress should assist in bringing an appropriate degree of formality to the workplace. A professional image is important when dealing with colleagues and internal customers as well as the public. For example: a) Training shoes, flip flops or similar footwear are not acceptable. Safety footwear may be required by risk assessment. b) Formal or tailored trousers, skirts may be worn. Jeans, shorts, tracksuit bottoms, vest tops, tank tops or similar, irrespective of colour, are not acceptable. Ties are optional. c) Business suits are acceptable. These are the preferred style of dress whenever staff are representing the Force at events.

Plain clothes

Casual clothing – Shorts and vests/tank tops, sandals/flip flops must not be worn, Covert (white) Met Vest worn under clothing, Covert equipment carriage harness, BWV carried using clothing clip or covert equipment carriage harness, Equipped with "POLICE OFFICER" lanyard for warrant card (being rolled out as part of Project Fortress)

Equipped with "POLICE OFFICER" baseball cap (high vis for unarmed or Taser officers), Equipped with a "POLICE" arm-band (optional)

Discreet clothing

Business attire / Casual Clothing, Overt Met Vest, Overt Belt Kit / Tac Vest

Unsuitable clothing

It is down to individual Head of Units to locally set the standard of what is/isn't acceptable to wear in a non-public facing environment. It is recognised that there are a variety of roles and working environments that staff and officer's work from that require different types of clothes and footwear to be worn in a non-public facing role. Any standards set locally should be in line with local health and safety risk assessments undertaken. When setting the standard styles of clothes worn should always be professional in appearance in accordance with the values of the MPS. In situations where there is a dispute, then the Chief Officer will be expected to resolve these situations Dress down days are permitted for charity raising events for staff or officers in non-public facing roles at the discretion of the Head of Unit.

Line managers

If you're a line manager making a decision about dress code, you must consider:

- health and safety
- hygiene
- ethnicity, religion and belief
- temperature
- equality
- gender
- medical factors
- reasonable adjustment needs

If you need to tell someone to comply with the code, you must be able to explain your decision.

Tattoos

The MPS has recently amended its policy guidelines on tattoos as it recognises that tattoos form part of many cultures and are becoming increasingly socially acceptable. The full guidelines can be found [here](#).

If you are joining the MPS or are already work for the MPS, a visible tattoo is permissible, as long as it is not on the face or on the front or side of the neck (above the collar line). Tattoos behind the ear lobe on the back of the neck are also acceptable within these policy guidelines.

You will be required to cover tattoos, when it is seen as appropriate for certain policing events, e.g. State Funerals, Opening of Parliament, Force Funerals, Remembrance Parades and other Ceremonial events.

The guidelines within this policy apply equally to all MPS staff, officers, police staff and volunteers, including those working in plain clothes roles when on duty.

Inappropriate tattoos

There will be automatic disqualification of applicants both officers and police staff for recruitment purposes, should any tattoo be considered to be: *discriminatory; offensive; undermine political neutrality i.e. rude, lewd, crude, racist, sexist, sectarian, homophobic or violent* or not in accordance with the values of the MPS. This applies whether the tattoo(s) is visible or not.' See imagery of inappropriate tattoos [here](#).

Visible tattoos for all staff

Tattoos are not allowed on your:

- face; and
- front or side of neck (above the collar line)

Visible tattoos are permissible on other areas of the body, including the back of neck as long as the tattoo is behind the ear lobe. Discreet tattoos on the ear are also considered acceptable.

Consideration will be however be given to tattoos on the face that were necessary following medical procedures e.g. eyebrows for someone who has permanently lost body hair or for the covering of scars, or for any cosmetic procedures.

There is no automatic preclusion from joining the MPS should an individual have discrete visible tattoos on their hands, or back of the neck, behind the ear lobe, on the ear or on top of the head.

Any tattoo that is behind the ear lobe on the back of the neck, will be seen as appropriate. The following tattoos are popular tattoos and would be seen as appropriate by the MPS as they are discreet, behind the ear lobe or can easily be covered if required. See examples of permissible visible tattoos [here](#).

Multiple tattoos

Having multiple tattoos across other parts of the body won't necessarily be unacceptable, as long as they are not offensive and do not meet the automatic disqualification criteria.

It is essential that the tattoos must also be able to be easily covered if there is a requirement to do so, in certain policing situations.

If candidates have larger tattoos on their, side or back of the neck, or on top of the head, which cannot be easily covered or not discreet, then this may result in being disqualified from the MPS for recruitment purposes.

Full torso, full legs, arms and multiple tattoos on their hands may therefore be considered acceptable. See examples of multiple tattoos [here](#).

Disclosure of tattoos

Full disclosure of any tattoo must be given (visible or otherwise) and a description of the tattoo is required for recruitment purposes. Each visible tattoo will be reviewed on its merits for consideration of disqualification/approval for joining the MPS for the above purposes.

Existing employees who wish to have a visible tattoo, must also meet the criteria in this policy. If this is breached it could potentially lead to misconduct and a requirement for the tattoo to be permanently covered at all times.

Further advice

If you are thinking of getting a tattoo and are unsure whether it fits within this policy, please first obtain advice and authorisation from your Line Manager before undergoing the procedure. In situations where there is a dispute, then second Line Managers will be expected to resolve.

Exceptions

If you need temporary henna tattoos on your hands for religious reasons, the same criteria should be followed for the covering of these temporary tattoos in certain policing situations.

Hot weather conditions

In extreme hot weather conditions Supervisors / Line Managers should use their discretion if there is a requirement for tattoos to be covered dependant on the policing situation.

Jewellery, earrings and piercings

You can wear:

- A watch of any colour
- Rings but they must not have large stones
- Necklaces (which must not be visible if you wear a uniform)
- One pair of small ear studs through each earlobe (you can wear earrings if you're not an officer). An officer can wear a single stud in one earlobe, with the other earlobe not being pierced.
- Large unplugged holes in the ear lobes can pose a health and safety risk, for staff and officers in both support and front line roles. Any large holes should be filled with an appropriate disc that should be neutral in colour.
- Jewellery of genuine religious importance that does not put your health and safety at risk.

The following can also be worn -

- Bindi, Nose Pin/Stud, Rakhi/Hindu Wrist Band, Sindoor and Tikka. Officers / staff can wear / apply these items for religious or family customs and traditions. Nose pin/stud should be of a small size and must be worn with an inner protective cover.
- Items of other religious significance can be carried / worn, subject to a risk assessment by the line manager. Exemptions may be permitted based on religion or belief requirements.
- However it is the individual's responsibility to manage associated risks in wearing such items, and for supervisors to ensure that the instructions are adhered to.

You may be asked to remove jewellery for operational purposes. If you feel unable to remove it for religious reasons, you may be moved onto a different task where your jewellery does not pose a safety risk.

Apart from for the religious reasons mentioned above, you must **not** wear:

- bracelets (unless medical)
- jewellery through the nose, eyebrow or tongue
- piercings to any other visible part of the body other than the earlobes
- any item that would conflict with personal protection equipment

Hair, beards, moustaches

Hair

Everyone: Your hair must be neat and not shaped or shaved into patterns or motifs. Moderate layering is acceptable, but a sharp dividing line between long and short sections is not.

With the exception of faint modest highlighting, you can only dye your hair one colour that's not conspicuously 'unnatural'.

Uniformed officers and staff: Hair must be worn above the collar.

If you have long hair, you **must** wear it neatly and securely fastened up, relatively close to and behind the head and so as not to interfere with any uniform headwear.

Long ponytails are not allowed.

Hair bands or ties must be black or navy.

Facial hair

Beards and moustaches are allowed, but they mustn't look unkempt. Keep them trimmed and smart. Facial hair should also be above the collar. Facial hair must not mask the outline of the face. Exceptions can be made on cultural and /or religious grounds.

Stubble is not allowed, so if you decide to grow facial hair, please do so off duty until the stubble phase is over, unless authorised by your line manager.

Makeup and fingernails

Everyone

Cosmetics may be worn in moderation and should be appropriate to the work environment and not detract from the professional business image that the force projects to members of the public.

Uniformed officers

Keep your makeup minimal. Nail varnish can be worn but must be colourless and must remain professional and discreet. You must keep your nails short to prevent injury to others.

Uniforms - general

Clothing and equipment issued to you for your job are the property of the Met.

You must keep your uniform clean and pressed.

Find out the correct uniform and equipment for your role:

- [Kit list for police officers](#)
- [Kit list for police staff](#)

Replace or return a uniform

We don't issue new uniforms annually - please **apply for new uniform items** when they become unusable.

If you stop working for the Met or your role no longer requires a uniform, you must surrender your kit and dispose of it according to the Met's [recycling policy](#).

If you're on a career break and decide not to return to the Met, you must make arrangements for your kit to be returned to your B/OCU for recycling. You mustn't dispose of it in any other way.

If you lose your uniform

Report the loss to your line manager.

Hats, helmets, caps

Headwear must be worn in public, but you can remove it in vehicles and buildings if it's safe to do so.

Peaked hats and caps must always be worn with the peak forward.

When on foot patrol, male constables and sergeants must wear the beat duty helmet, and women the bowler.

There may be operational circumstances, which mean that the wearing of police/police staff hats is not practical or appropriate. (This excludes religious headwear) This is a matter for supervisors to manage locally with their respective teams.

During exceptional periods of cold weather an MPS issued beanie hat can be worn, this will be at the discretion of the BCU/OCU Commander to authorise dependant on the policing situation. It is not envisaged that MPS beanie hats be worn for routine patrol rather their use can be authorised for exceptional weather or for a specific duty (such as a 12 hour scene guard in inclement weather). They cannot be used for public order or other aid without the explicit permission of the public order commander.

Security staff must wear their headwear when on patrol outside buildings or when controlling access to buildings.

Navy baseball caps must only be worn by authorised firearms and public order officers.

Bump caps are issued only when the risk assessment dictates it - they are not part of the standard uniform. Navy bump caps are worn by police officers and blue bump caps are worn by police staff when conducting a search.

Yellow baseball caps with police markings must only be issued to plain-clothes police officers on proactive plain-clothes work. This is to make their identity known quickly to other police colleagues. They do not denote authority of police powers, and are not a replacement for proper ID or a search warrant. If you lose your yellow baseball cap, you must report it to your line manager immediately.

[Advice about religious headgear.](#)

Religious headwear

If for religious reasons you wish to wear different headwear to the item provided for your task, you must discuss the health and safety implications with your line manager.

Line managers should consider requests case by case - get advice from SafetyandHealth@met.police.uk.

The style of alternative headwear must be neat and presentable. Any material must be of a matt finish and one colour, in keeping with the main uniform.

Choose reasonably priced material and ask your line manager for permission before buying so that you can reclaim the cost. The material then becomes Met property. Avoid fibres that are a fire hazard; wool-based fabric is best.

You don't have to wear the Met badge or banding on this item.

If you wear alternative headwear for religious reasons, you must:

- keep your face and any Met insignia, numbering and name badge visible
- wear a bowler hat on top if the risk assessment tells you to, or use a protective insert
- use fasteners such as press studs or Velcro for quick release
- tuck the ends of any headgear inside your collar when wearing a high visibility jacket, for maximum visibility

Any small, close-fitting religious headwear can be worn under your duty helmet or cap.

Items of religious significance can be carried by officers and staff subject to a risk assessment.

This includes the Kirpan which should be carried in a concealed and secure way. 139(5) of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 allows the wearing of the Kirpan

Spectacles and sunglasses

This only applies to officers and staff who wear a uniform.

Lenses must be made of clear plastic (this is what most standard subscription lenses are made of).

They must not be:

- mirrored
- photo-chromic (lenses that change to light)
- too dark - your eyes should still be visible through the lenses

Frames can be of any colour and design.

When talking to members of the public, you must remove sunglasses or cyclist shaded eye protection.

Ties, cravats, scarves

This only applies to officers and staff who wear a uniform.

Ties and cravats

When wearing long-sleeve shirts, women must wear cravats and men must wear black ties.

When a short sleeve shirt is worn (in any role) without an outer garment then a tie or cravat is not required to be worn for the avoidance of doubt this is not limited to Summer months

When a short sleeve shirt is worn with an outer garment (which does not include a MetVest but includes fleeces or jackets) then a tie or cravat will be worn.

When deployed on Aid, Gold for that event will determine your dress code which will be articulated in the aid order. In addition local supervisors can direct that long sleeve shirts with a tie be worn to ensure consistency of appearance where necessary.

Don't wear a tie pin.

Scarves

A scarf must:

- only be worn with an anorak
- have its ends worn inside the anorak
- not obscure the face
- be a service-issue scarf

Shirts and shirtsleeves

This only applies to officers and staff who wear a uniform.

When you're working in a building, you can wear a white shirt as your outer layer. This is called 'shirtsleeve order'. It must not be a patrol shirt.

Underclothes must not be visible through your white shirt (i.e. no patterns or bold colours). Underclothes must not be visible at the collar, so use vests or v-neck t-shirts.

When wearing a long-sleeve shirt, you must wear your cravat (women) or tie (men).

You can roll shirt sleeves up neatly to just above the elbow in warm weather.

In hot weather, your supervisor may allow you to wear short-sleeve shirts open at the neck. If they do:

- only the top button may be unfastened
- jewellery and underclothing must not be visible at the neck
- gloves may not be used unless for safety reasons

Body armour (MetVests)

Full details about body armour (MetVests) are in the [officer safety section](#).

You must wear it when in a public facing role, unless your OCU commander says otherwise.

MetVests should:

- only be worn by you, because it was chosen for your body shape
- be worn overtly, unless operational orders dictate otherwise.

More information

Guide on how to [wear your MetVest and what roles need to wear a MetVest](#).

Trousers and skirts

This only applies to officers and staff who wear a uniform.

You must not wear patrol trousers if you're performing office-based duties.

If you're a female officer, you can wear either trousers or a skirt, but trousers are usually more practical.

You may be ordered to wear trousers on the basis of a risk assessment, or to wear a skirt for events like military or royal ceremonies.

Waterproof overtrousers

These must only be worn with an anorak or high visibility jacket.

Jackets, anoraks, fleeces, tabards

Uniformed officers on patrol together must keep a consistent appearance. So everyone on your patrol should either be wearing fleeces, or jackets, or be in shirt sleeves - not a mixture.

You must not leave your anorak, jacket or fleece open - you must fasten it all the way up and turn the collar down, except for protection in bad weather.

Fleece over or under body armour

If you're wearing a fleece, it must be worn over your body armour.

The only exception is officers in specialist roles who wear ballistic body armour with fixed personal protective equipment. All officers on that team must do the same for consistency of appearance.

High visibility jackets

You must wear a high visibility jacket as your outermost garment when:

- directing or dealing with traffic
- cycling or motorcycling
- any other situation where your visibility is important for your safety

You mustn't wear the jacket open.

If you're on mobile patrol, you must have high visibility jackets available in the vehicle in case you need to deal with a road incident.

If you're a motorcyclist, during daylight hours between 1 April to 30 September, you can wear an 'H-belt' if you wish, subject to a risk assessment. But you must still carry

a high visibility jacket in your top box or panniers in case you need to deal with a road incident.

High - visibility clothing - General

High-visibility clothing and high visibility policing should not be confused. There are some circumstances when it may be appropriate to direct that high visibility clothing is worn (this might be to ensure officers can be spotted in a crowd, working on or near a road, cycle patrol or night time economy policing). The decision to direct that high visibility clothing *must* be worn for a particular operation, activity or team should be made at Chief Inspector level.

For specific operations an RA/3 may be required and the default position for dealing with / stopping vehicles is that high visibility clothing must be worn.

High-visibility policing may be achieved through officers being visible in full uniform and headgear with or without high-visibility clothing (yellow jackets). Consideration should be given to any direction to wear high-visibility clothing during particularly warm weather where the comfort and wellbeing of officers should also be a factor in any decision making.

Molle tac vest

Wearing MOLLE tac vest with carriage of PPE on it may require it to be worn over fleece/high visibility jacket. Not to be worn as such on fast road or a vehicle stop site. Wearer to check fitting and that safety not compromised.

High visibility tabards

These are issued only for identification in public order situations and must be worn only on the direction of your Silver Commander.

They are not to be worn when working in traffic duty - for this you must wear the high visibility jacket.

Epaulettes and name badges

Epaulettes

Epaulettes must:

- have the correct identifying letters and numbers and/or insignia of rank
- be worn on the outermost garment
- be visible at all times

All uniformed officers and staff who are required to have identification numbers will have embroidered epaulettes, where the roll out of embroidered epaulettes commenced in 2019; metal identification on epaulettes will be phased out for day to day uniform requirements. Metal figures will still however need to be worn on tunics.

Name badges

You must wear a name badge on the outermost garment of your uniform.

In rare cases, a risk assessment may show that wearing a name badge is not appropriate. Your manager must keep a record of this decision.

Name badges are not substitutes for police staff passes or warrant cards.

Police officers and police staff wearing uniform are required to identify themselves in policing situations; in exceptional circumstances you may as a short-term requirement be given the authority by a member of the local SLT to remove your name badge for a specific duty being undertaken. This will need to be accompanied by a written risk assessment, which should be balanced against the need for identification. If there are specific risks which are likely to be longer term, then a name badge using a warrant number instead of a name can be authorised. This would again need a written risk assessment with the authority of a member of the local SLT and can then be ordered by your local LDSS team. The default expectation is that all officers display a name badge when in uniform. Nothing in this policy impacts the display of identification for terrorism related matters for which guidance can be obtained from SO15.

You must report the loss or theft of your name badge immediately to your line manager.

Temporary promoted officers can order a new name badge reflecting their temporary promoted rank.

Officers or staff who are awarded a National Honour e.g. OBE, can have this award on their name badge.

Tunics, medals and ribbons

Tunics

If tunics are part of your kit list, it does not mean that they are worn in ordinary daily duty.

You must wear them:

- at coroner's court unless the court directs otherwise
- at misconduct hearings unless the tribunal directs otherwise
- at official police ceremonies
- where instructed in an operational order

Male officers must wear a whistle in their left pocket.

Medals, orders, decorations and ribbons

Only awards authorised by the Sovereign may be worn, and only on a tunic (left side). They are usually only allowed for ceremonial or parade duties, but your operational orders will tell you in each case.

You must wear Royal Humane Society medals on the right-hand side above the pocket on a man's tunic and in a similar position above the yoke seam on a woman's.

You mustn't wear medal bars on body armour.

Badges, poppies, sashes, charity wrist bands

Please don't wear badges advertising causes, beliefs or charities. They distract from our corporate identity and compromise the impartiality of the Met.

We do take part in the following, so you can wear these:

- the Police Memorial Day badge for the week leading up to Memorial Day (St Michael's Day) and/or when attending or policing a police memorial service or reception.
- the red Haig poppy of The Royal British Legion, for the annual campaign period (28 October to 11 November or Remembrance Day if later), or as directed in an Operation Order.
- the [Help for Heroes badge](#) and wrist band.

If you're in uniform, position the badge or poppy on the left lapel of your tunic, or in similar position on other garments.

Shoes, socks, tights, gloves, belts

This only applies to officers and staff who wear a uniform.

Shoes

Shoes or boots must be:

- black, strong and polished
- made from leather/imitation leather of a plain pattern
- low-heeled and without embellishment or exaggerated shape

Socks

They must be dark blue or black, depending on your kit.

Stockings and tights

If you're wearing a skirt, you must wear black stockings or tights.

Gloves

You can wear standard-issue gloves when appropriate.

You mustn't wear them if you're in shirt sleeves, unless you need to protect your hands.

Belts

You must wear standard-issue belts with uniform trousers and skirts.

When wearing your standard equipment utility belt, you must carry only authorised items on it.

Court attendance

Non-uniformed staff must wear smart office clothes in court.

If you're a uniformed officer, you must wear it when giving evidence in court (including tie/cravat).

This doesn't apply if you're absent from work while:

- sick
- on maternity leave
- on a career break

Neither does it apply to officers permanently employed in plain clothes.

Police officers attending court in uniform will carry all their officer safety equipment while giving evidence and patrolling court buildings (magistrates and crown).

You must wear a tunic at coroner's court unless the court directs otherwise.

Officer safety equipment

You must carry officer safety equipment in the appropriate pouches on the equipment belt. An alternative carriage system is available for plain clothes officers or a role authorised by the Clothing Board.

Check our [guide to officer safety equipment](#).

Pregnant

Wearing a uniform while pregnant will depend on the work you're doing and the related risk assessment.

If you're told you don't need to wear a uniform, you should still stick to the [general Met dress code](#).

Off-duty wearing of uniform

To wear your uniform when you're not on duty to events **within** the Met district, seek authority from a substantive Inspector:

- service funerals or the funeral of a close relation
- weddings / civil partnership ceremonies
- police awards ceremonies
- other OCU ceremonial events

To wear your uniform off-duty to events **outside** the Met district, you need to seek authority from an OCU Commander (Ch Supt level).

Suggest new kit for your role

Responsibility for deciding appropriate garments and kit lists lies only with the Clothing Board.

If you and your unit believe you need additional or alternative clothing or personal protective equipment, please complete a [user requirement](#).

Police Memorabilia

Police Memorabilia which has been approved as items for gifts to other forces or visiting guests are as follows:

- Flat Cap
- Bowler Hat
- Beat Helmet
- Whistle and chain

If BCUs/OCUs would like to purchase these items, this would need to be financed from local budgets.