



**U.S. Department of Justice**  
Federal Bureau of Prisons

OPERATIONS MEMORANDUM

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EXPIRATION DATE: March 26, 2019

## Staff Uniforms and Uniform Allowances

*Approved:* Mark S. Inch  
Director, Federal Bureau of Prisons

Title 5 of the United States Code, Section 5901, authorizes agencies to issue a uniform allowance to those employees who are required by the agency to wear a prescribed uniform. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is responsible for issuing regulations pursuant to this authority. The BOP currently limits the allowance for each prescribed uniform to no less than \$600 per year per uniformed employee. OPM may from time to time adjust the maximum allowance by regulation. The allowance for each prescribed uniform must be negotiated with the Union, up to the maximum allowed by law or regulation. Any agreed-upon exceptions or changes in clothing allowance amount will be provided to institutions through Operations Memoranda.

The content of this Operations Memorandum will be incorporated into and will supersede Section 19 of Program Statement 3300.03, **Employment**, dated May 8, 2017.

### *References*

5 U.S.C. 105

5 U.S.C. 5901

5 CFR part 591

Program Statement **Correctional Services Procedures Manual**

Program Statement **Employment**

Program Statement **Property Management Manual**

Program Statement **Food Service Manual**

Program Statement **Management of Staff Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens**

Master Agreement

## 1. DEVELOPMENT, MANAGEMENT, AND CONTROL OF UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS

The Director retains authority for prescribing a uniform requirement, authorizing a uniform allowance, and specifying uniform items. A Bureau of Prisons Staff Uniform Committee will convene as directed by the Chairperson to review proposals and formulate recommendations to the Director.

Each Warden is delegated the authority, consistent with this policy and the Program Statement **Property Management Manual**, to prescribe protective clothing. Local procedures will be developed in accordance with the Master Agreement.

A uniform requirement not currently authorized by this policy for non-uniformed positions can be requested by submitting (through the local CEO) a proposal to the Assistant Director over the affected discipline. If approved by the Assistant Director, the proposal will be directed to the Committee to formulate a recommendation for the prescribed uniform clothing items. The recommendation, including a statement of funds availability signed by the Assistant Director, Administration Division, will be forwarded to the Director for final approval. If requested by the Council of Prison Locals, committee recommendations approved by the Director will be subject to bargaining on impact and implementation.

## 2. BUREAU OF PRISONS STAFF UNIFORM COMMITTEE

a. **Membership.** Standing Committee membership is:

- Deputy Assistant Director, Human Resource Management Division (Chairperson).
- Chief, Labor Relations Office, Coordinator.
- Procurement Executive.
- Correctional Services Administrator.
- Controller, UNICOR.
- President, Council of Prison Locals (or designee).

Ad-hoc members may be appointed by the Chairperson after consultation with the President, Council of Prison Locals.

b. **Committee Functions.** The Committee will:

- Conduct research in reference to the Committee's agenda.
- Review requests and proposals for changes to current staff uniform policies and allowances, and develop recommendations for the Director.

- Review proposals and formulate recommendations to the Director concerning uniform clothing items and allowances for new positions.
- Recommend and review staff surveys and questionnaires pertaining to uniforms and make recommendations based on survey results.
- Seek solutions to problems and concerns submitted to the Committee.
- Complete other assignments as referred by the Director, the Executive Staff, the HRM Wardens' Advisory Group, or the Committee Chairperson.
- Ensure continued compliance with uniform specifications by vendors, in consultation with Administration Division.
- Periodically monitor original vendor samples submitted to the Uniform Committee. The Committee will preserve submitted samples from the vendors in Central Office for no less than 5 years.

c. **Committee Chairperson Functions.** The Chairperson will:

- Receive suggestions, proposals, and concerns as submitted by management or Union officials for direct response or processing through the committee, as appropriate.
- Convene and conduct Committee meetings at least annually, unless it is mutually agreed to cancel the meeting.
- Monitor Committee actions and conduct follow-up activities.
- Respond to questions, concerns, and recommendations that do not warrant a full Committee meeting for discussion and review.

d. **Committee Coordinator Functions.** The Committee Coordinator will:

- Schedule meetings at the call of the Chairperson, make arrangements for the meeting site, and notify all members.
- Prepare and distribute agendas and minutes to committee members.
- Coordinate pre-meeting and follow-up activities.

### 3. **ISSUANCE OF UNIFORM ALLOWANCE**

a. **Amount.** Each employee who occupies a position for which there is a prescribed uniform will be issued an annual allowance of \$600.

b. **Procedures.** Servicing HRM offices will authorize a uniform allowance for each eligible employee using the Authorization to Receive Uniform Allowance form (BP-A0374), or other form created locally, when eligibility is established. The servicing HRM office will certify the employee's eligibility date annually.

Any employee who changes from one uniformed position to another that requires a different uniform will be given the full authorized amount for the new uniform. The effective date of the change becomes the new anniversary date for issuance of the uniform allowance. Pro rata repayment of the initial allowance is not required.

Any employee detailed to another institution for an extended period due to an emergency situation, in a position requiring a uniform or a different uniform than the employee usually wears, is entitled to a minimum of one-half of the uniform allowance for the detailed position. Any determination of a reasonable allowance over the minimum is to be made on a case-by-case basis.

Employees detailed in non-emergency situations to positions requiring a different uniform are entitled to an appropriate uniform allowance for the new uniform. For example, an employee who is detailed for a period of six months or less may receive an allowance no more than half of the annual authorized amount.

#### **4. APPROVED VENDORS**

The Staff Uniform Committee is responsible for the selection of vendor(s) to provide uniform clothing items that meet established specifications. Employees must purchase authorized uniform items from the list of approved vendors. Institutions (e.g., Human Resources, Business Office, etc.) are responsible for providing employees with specifications for authorized uniform items and information (such as brochures, order forms, and price lists) from the approved vendors.

#### **5. PROTECTIVE CLOTHING**

Protective clothing and safety shoes/boots are not considered uniform items and will be issued and controlled in accordance with the Program Statements **Property Management Manual** and **Management of Staff Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens**, and the Master Agreement. Safety-toed footwear will be black in color.

#### **6. AUTHORIZED UNIFORMS**

All employees performing duties in the services described below are required to wear the approved uniform while performing official duties. Supervisors/HR staff will ensure employees are aware of the prescribed uniform. Supervisors will monitor staff uniforms (to include issues with wear, tearing, and cleanliness) routinely during duty hours to ensure compliance with this policy and the Master Agreement.

Staff who are not in proper uniform will be informed of the uniform requirements. After the second such notice, staff will be made aware that continued failure to wear the proper uniform may lead to disciplinary action.

Department heads are not authorized to wear a uniform. To the extent it does not conflict with the principles and policy of this section, the wearing of uniforms may be further addressed in other Bureau policy for particular disciplines.

**With the exception of the optional sweater and windbreaker, uniform clothing should generally not be worn off duty, and may not be worn in a manner or situation that negatively impacts the agency or gives the appearance of representing the agency without authorization.**

- a. **Lieutenant Uniform.** The lieutenant uniform is authorized for lieutenants only. The uniform consists of a white dress shirt with gold monogrammed first initial and last name, charcoal gray dress pants, plain black belt, and black tie.
- b. **Dress Uniform.** The dress uniform consists of a charcoal gray long-sleeved shirt with silver monogrammed first initial and last name, charcoal gray dress pants, plain black belt, and black tie.
- c. **Work Uniform.** The work uniform is normally authorized for Correctional Services posts and other departments unless the nickel gray uniform is authorized (section d.).

All Correctional Services employees, Correctional Systems employees, and Correctional Counselors will normally wear the work uniform. The Warden will determine when the dress uniform will be required during unique/special events or occasions (e.g., Congressional visits, Director's visits, or visits from government officials or dignitaries), or the staff member may wear the dress uniform at his/her own election. All Correctional Services employees, Correctional Systems employees, and Correctional Counselors who wear the work uniform must have at least one complete dress uniform.

The uniform consists of charcoal gray cargo-style, 6-pocket pants, plain black belt, charcoal gray work shirt with silver monogrammed first initial and last name, or the optional approved charcoal gray polo shirt with silver monogrammed first initial and last name.

- (1) **Work Uniforms – Recreation Staff.** Recreation Staff will wear the charcoal gray polo shirt with silver monogrammed first initial and last name, or the charcoal gray work shirt with silver monogrammed first initial and last name, with the charcoal gray recreation shorts with BOP starburst emblem on the left leg, or the charcoal gray cargo-style, 6-pocket pants.
- (2) **Work Uniforms – Staff Training Academy.** Staff Training Academy (STA) instructors' required attire is listed under a memorandum signed by the Director of the STA.
- (3) **Work Uniforms – Food Services.** Food Services staff authorized to wear the uniform will wear the charcoal gray work uniform with additional items as required by the Program Statement

**Food Service Manual.** Wardens may exempt Assistant Food Service Administrators, and, upon the employee's request, administrative staff in Food Services (e.g., Food Services Assistant) from this requirement. Exempted employees will not receive a uniform allowance.

(4) **Work Uniforms – Health Services.** Health Services Staff performing clinical (patient care-related) duties will wear uniforms consistent with community standards, taking into consideration the correctional aspect of the duties and security level. Uniform types and colors will be determined locally (excluding inmate uniform, camouflage, or SORT colors). Approved uniform types are as follows:

- Scrubs-type tops and pants (usually worn by Nurses, Central Supply Technicians, Nursing Assistants, Medication Techs, Dental Assistants, etc.).
- Polo shirts (plain or with BOP starburst emblem) and pants (cargo type with multi-pockets and belt loops, usually worn by EMTs and Paramedics).

Physician Assistants, Nurse Practitioners, Dental Officers, and Medical Officers can opt out of wearing an approved uniform by completing and submitting a BP-A0374 to Human Resources, and wear the lab coats provided by the BOP over their own clothing of choice. No uniform allowance will be provided to those clinical staff who elect not to wear the required uniform.

d. **Work Uniform – Nickel Gray.** The nickel gray uniform is authorized for the following:

- Authorized staff in Facilities.
- UNICOR.
- Warehouse workers.
- Farm employees.
- Security Officers.
- Recycling Technicians (or Safety Compliance/Environmental Compliance Specialists at locations without a recycling operation).
- Specified Correctional Services posts to be determined locally.

Wardens may exempt specific positions from this nickel gray requirement, who will then wear the charcoal gray uniform instead and continue to receive the uniform allowance. Wardens may also exempt General Foremen, Project Foremen, Engineering Technicians, V.T. Instructors, and, upon the employee's request, Facilities Assistants from the requirement to wear either uniform. Exempted General Foremen, Project Foremen, Engineering Technicians, V.T. Instructors, and Facilities Assistants will not receive a uniform allowance.

The uniform consists of a nickel gray button-up shirt in rip-stop material with silver monogrammed first initial and last name, and nickel gray cargo style, 6-pocket pants in rip-stop material. Optional fire-retardant nickel gray uniforms are also available.

e. **Optional Items - All Uniforms.** Where appropriate for health and comfort reasons, and in conformance with local policy and procedures, any uniformed employee may wear a black long-sleeved monogrammed (with BOP starburst emblem) sweater, or black monogrammed (with BOP starburst emblem) windbreaker with the uniform. Staff may also opt to wear a black uniform skirt in place of pants. The length of the skirt must be appropriate, at least to the top of the staff member's knees when standing. Other uniform items (including outer garments) are not authorized unless specified in policy or the Master Agreement.

## **7. EMBLEMS, ILLUSTRATIONS, AND LETTERING**

Bureau of Prisons emblems or lettering may not be sewn, embroidered, or printed on **any** item of clothing unless it is herein approved for that clothing item or specifically approved by the Director. Unless expressly authorized by the Director, protective clothing or uniform items must not display slogans, printing, or lettering other than that identifying the Bureau of Prisons and the official name of the institution. Any protective clothing or uniform item that includes the Bureau of Prisons emblem or lettering must be purchased from an approved vendor, except as provided by the Master Agreement.

Personal clothing items that may be authorized to be worn with the uniform in accordance with Article 28 of the Master Agreement may not display any emblem, slogan, printing, or lettering.

## **8. NAME TAGS AND OTHER ADORNMENTS**

Name tags, approved by the Director, will be provided by the institution to all non-uniformed employees. Supervisors, managers, and staff who do not have a monogrammed shirt are required to wear the provided name tag while in official duty status.

Uniformed staff are provided with monograms on their uniforms.

In the interest of professionalism, uniformed employees will not wear jewelry that detracts from the overall professional appearance of the uniform while on duty. As a matter of professionalism, personal safety, or institution security, specific items of jewelry or other adornment may be prohibited altogether, consistent with the Master Agreement.

Adornments denoting any agency or organization other than the Bureau of Prisons, or any cause or belief, must not be worn on or with the uniform unless specifically authorized by the Director or in accordance with the Master Agreement.