

**BOULDER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE  
POLICY AND PROCEDURES MANUAL****SUBJECT:** Uniforms & Appearance**NUMBER:** 523**EFFECTIVE:** November 27, 2023**SUPERSEDES:** November 13, 2023

**POLICY:** It is the policy of the Sheriff's Office that employees wear the approved or issued uniform(s) in a consistently prescribed manner, and given deputies and employees are highly visible representatives of local government and the policing community, professional appearance is of utmost importance. The Sheriff's Office recognizes that while there are a wide variety of norms of acceptable appearance within our communities, our employees must present a professional, conservative appearance in order to effectively engage with all members of the community. Therefore, the following standards of uniform, equipment, and professional appearance in this policy are adopted for all employees. Division Chiefs are authorized to issue additional division-specific policies and procedures providing further guidance as necessary.

**DEFINITIONS:**

**Class A Uniform:** A long sleeve dress shirt, fully buttoned, with a black tie worn and secured to this dress shirt by a polished silver tie bar, with a metal badge, polished 3/8" silver metal name plate, and metal rank insignia for command and executive staff. Pants are to be of a dress style, without cargo or BDU pockets. Service hash marks are required, and award ribbons and skill pins authorized under this policy are allowed at employee discretion.

**Class B Uniform:** Inclusive of all Class A specifications, but not of a dress style and service hash marks on the long sleeve shirt may be worn at the employee's discretion. The shirt is worn without a tie with the shirt collar open. The shirt may be long or short sleeved, but long sleeve shirts must remain buttoned; long sleeve undershirts may never be worn with short sleeve uniform shirts under any circumstance regardless of color. Cargo pocket style BDU pants are authorized at deputy discretion. Service hash marks, award ribbons, and skill pins authorized under this policy are allowed at employee discretion.

**Command Staff:** All commanders within a division.

**Decorations:** Class I & II awards, as designated and authorized by the *Awards & Recognition* policy (#317).

**Executive Staff:** For purposes of this policy, the uniformed members of the Sheriff's executive staff are the Sheriff, Undersheriff, and Division Chiefs.

**Skill Pins:** Pins worn on the designated Class A and Class B uniforms shirts that denote special skills (e.g., SWAT, Bomb/EOD technician, K9, firearms instructor, DRE, HazMat, etc.).

**Tactical Uniform:** A unit-specific uniform designated for special unit activities or operations.

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Uniformed Employee: For purposes of this policy, uniformed employee refers to any employee authorized to wear a uniform while performing a sanctioned sheriff's office job function or task. Uniformed employees include all sworn job classifications, regardless of whether their current job assignment requires a uniform or not, with exception of undercover investigators assigned to the Boulder County Drug Task Force who are exempted from §I.A. of this policy. Uniformed employees may include civilian employees issued clothing embroidered with a Sheriff's star or other Sheriff insignia, as determined by each Division Chief.

### **PROCEDURE:**

#### **I. General Appearance and Grooming**

##### **A. Employees**

1. All employees are expected to maintain a neat, clean, well-groomed, professional appearance, while at work.
  - a. All clothing and footwear will be clean and in good condition.
  - b. Clothing must always be appropriate for the employee's business environment and must cover intimate body parts and undergarments.
  - c. Items of clothing, headwear, accessories, and jewelry shall not explicitly, or through innuendo, have sexual, violent, political, offensive, alcohol, drug, or narcotics references, or derogatory connotations.
  - d. No t-shirts are to be worn, unless under vests, blazers, or shirts, unless required for a specific job task.
    - i. Staff assigned to the Technical Services (Radio Shop), Sheriff Computer Support, and Communications are exempt from this section given their work conditions.
    - ii. Employees attending an internal training event, may wear a t-shirt and/or other athletic attire if the training environment is conducive to such (e.g., CPR, DT, etc.).
  - e. The length of a dress, skirt or shorts shall be no shorter than mid-thigh when standing.

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- f. Costumes are prohibited unless specifically authorized.
- g. Any adornment or dress code violation from this policy a supervisor deems questionable will be forwarded to the Division Chief and/or Undersheriff for final approval or disapproval.

### **2. Tattoos**

- a. Employees are not to display a tattoo, temporary decal, or portion thereof that is visible above the collarbone.
- b. No employee may display a tattoo or temporary decal that is deemed racist, sexist, offensive, or obscene.

*Examples may include but are not limited to: Tattoos that depict nudity, are sexually explicit or depict sexual acts; tattoos that display obscene, offensive, racist, sexist, or vulgar words; tattoos that depict symbols used by militant, racist, or hate groups; tattoos that promote, support, or identify gangs, gang activity, or gang affiliation.*

- c. Employees with tattoos or temporary decals that are deemed inappropriate shall ensure they are covered while at work (e.g., wearing a long-sleeved shirt, cover-up sleeve, etc.).
- d. Tattoos that are medically necessary or are common cosmetic tattoos (e.g., permanent eyebrows, makeup, skin discoloration repair, etc.) are exempt from this policy.

### **3. Body Ornamentation**

- a. Body ornamentation shall include, but is not limited to: Body piercing jewelry, intentional body mutilation, intentional scarring, or intentional placement of foreign objects in or under the skin.
- b. Unless further restricted by this policy or a divisional policy, employees will be allowed jewelry or piercings on visible parts of the body as long as the adornment does not interfere with their job function.
- c. Intentional body mutilation, piercing, branding, or intentional scarring that is visible is prohibited.

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*Examples include but are not limited to: Split or forked tongues; abnormal shaping or coloring of the ears, eyes, nose or teeth; foreign objects inserted under the skin to create a design or pattern; and/or enlarged or stretched earlobes beyond normal ear piercings.*

4. Contact lenses, if worn on duty, are to be of a natural eye color. Red, orange, silver, and other unnaturally colored or graphic design contacts that create or result in an unnatural eye color or appearance are prohibited.
5. The use of gold, platinum, or other veneers or caps for teeth for the purpose of ornamentation are prohibited. Teeth, whether natural, capped, or veneer, shall not be ornamental with designs, jewels, initials, or other graphics.

**B. Uniformed Employees**

1. All uniformed employees, whether sworn as a peace-officer or not, are expected to maintain a neat, clean, well-groomed, professional appearance, while in uniform.
  - a. Uniformed employees are responsible for maintaining their uniforms in good condition. Uniforms must be clean and wrinkle-free. Duty gear must be clean and in good repair. Faded or torn uniforms are prohibited.
  - b. Visible jewelry is restricted to conservative rings, wristwatches, stud-style earrings, and must not present a safety hazard.
  - c. Hair
    1. Male uniformed employees' hair must be neatly groomed. Unnatural colors or extreme styles are not permitted.
    2. Female uniformed employees' hair must be neatly groomed. Unnatural colors or extreme styles are not permitted.
    3. Facial hair must be neatly groomed and cannot interfere with a uniformed employee's ability to perform their duties.

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- C. The Division Chief is the deciding authority as to whether a uniformed employee's appearance and grooming meets the letter and spirit of this policy.

**II. Authorized Use and Wear of Uniforms**

- A. Each division chief is responsible for establishing guidelines as to the appropriate uniform wear and usage within their respective division, including specifications and accessories to be worn by employees of their division. All uniforms require the approval of the Sheriff prior to their purchase and wear.
- B. Employees are to wear the appropriate class of uniform prescribed for the type of duty to be performed, or as directed by a supervisor authorized to set uniform requirements. Unless otherwise directed, uniformed employees are authorized to wear any approved uniform class at their discretion.
- C. While in attendance at a formal occasion (e.g., funerals or other ceremonies), a Class A uniform will be worn.

**III. Purchase, Issuance, Care, and Replacement of Authorized Uniforms**

- A. The Administration Division is responsible to maintain a comprehensive list of uniform items approved by the Sheriff for wear, including brand, model, color, and part numbers.
- B. The commander over the Personnel & Training Unit in the Administration Division is responsible for maintaining a requisition, approval, and issuance/inventory process for uniforms and equipment to be used across all divisions, and to establish contracts with vendors for uniform and equipment purchase in accordance with county purchasing policies.
- C. The quartermaster in the Administration Division is responsible for coordinating the purchase or issuance of approved uniforms and equipment items upon the receipt of an approved request.
  - 1. Only uniform brands and styles approved by the Sheriff are authorized for purchase at department expense.
- D. The quartermaster in the Administration Division is responsible for maintaining a uniform and equipment inventory for each uniformed employee. The quartermaster records the issuance of all apparel and accessories to uniformed employees as they occur, and checks returned uniforms and equipment back in when an employee separates from the organization. In addition, the

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quartermaster is responsible for maintaining a list of all approved uniform items and vendors.

- E. Employees are required to use the established requisition and approval process to obtain uniforms and equipment at department expense.
  - 1. By approving a request for uniforms, accessories, or equipment, the employee's supervisor has determined that repair or replacement of any uniform or part is necessary.
- F. Cleaning and care of issued uniforms, accessories, and equipment, is the responsibility of the receiving employee.

### **IV. Uniforms**

#### **A. Insignia and Rank**

- 1. Shoulder patches are centered on the left and right shoulder sleeves, ½" below the shoulder seam.
- 2. When authorized for uniform apparel, the Sheriff's Office cloth star badge is centered, 3 1/2" above the left breast pocket.
- 3. A 3/8" metal polished silver nameplate is centered above the right breast pocket with no space showing between the pocket and the nameplate on all uniform shirts. The nameplate shall read with the employee's first name initial and last name (i.e., "J. Doe"); the employee is authorized to include their middle initial if desired (i.e., "J.D. Doe").
- 4. A cloth nameplate must be worn on outerwear and will read in the same manner as the metal nameplate.
- 5. The Sheriff (4-stars), Undersheriff (3-stars), Division Chiefs (2-stars), and Commanders (1-star), wear 5/8" silver metal insignia designating their rank on all uniform shirts. Cloth insignia of the same size and composition is worn on tactical uniforms, when applicable. The rank insignia is to be worn centered on the collar, ½" from the leading edge, and parallel with the upper edge of the shirt collar.
  - a. Cloth shoulder board insignia are worn centered on each shoulder of the outerwear. If a sweater is worn, rank insignia may be placed on the shirt collar.

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6. Sergeant chevrons are sewn on all sleeves, except for the tactical uniform, ¼" below the lowest center point of the shoulder patch, on both uniform shirts and outerwear.
  7. FTO patches are sewn on all sleeves, except for the tactical uniform, ¼" below the lowest center point of the shoulder patch, on both uniform shirts and outerwear.
  8. Years-of-service hash marks (one hash mark for every five completed years of service) must be worn on the outside left sleeve of the Class A uniform and may be worn on the class B uniform, near the cuff, when:
    - a. Uniformed deputies who have completed at least five years of service with the Sheriff's Office are eligible to display years-of-service hash marks on their Class A uniform.
    - b. Following five years of service with the Sheriff's Office, commissioned deputies with prior law enforcement experience with other agencies may seek authorization from their division chief to display years-of-service hash marks commensurate with their prior service. Division chiefs are to only consider the following as prior service for purposes of this section:
      - 1) Fulltime employment as a sworn, non-military, law enforcement officer assigned to patrol, investigative, or correction functions, with authority to make arrests, enforce and investigate federal, state, or local laws.
    - c. Uniformed deputies hired at command level rank or higher may display years-of-service hash marks commensurate with their service years upon the start of their employment.
- B. Decorations and Special Skill Pin and Service Pins Identifiers
1. Sheriff's Office award decoration ribbons (Class I & II awards) and decoration ribbons for commonly known awards (e.g., the Beth Haynes Award, the FBI LEEDA Trilogy Award, the FBI National Academy, the Northwestern School of Police Staff and Command, etc.), and Sheriff's campaign ribbons, are authorized for wear on Class A and Class B uniform shirts. Decoration ribbons are to be worn as follows:
    - a. Centered on, and ¼" over the metal nameplate

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- b. Two or more decoration pins are placed above the nameplate, side-by-side horizontally, in order of precedence, with the highest award near the badge. A maximum of three decoration pins or ribbons may be worn horizontally; additional pins are then worn in a new row.
    - 1) Order of precedence: Purple Heart, Medal of Valor, Silver Star, Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal, Life-Saving Medal, Distinguished Service Award, Distinguished Unit Citation, Sheriff's campaign ribbons, and other non-BCSO decoration ribbons (e.g., Beth Haynes Award, FBI NA, etc.).
  - 2. Special skill identifier pins are authorized by the affected division chief, and are to be placed  $\frac{1}{4}$ " above, and centered on the nameplate, or, if applicable,  $\frac{1}{4}$ " above and centered on any decorations. Only one qualification pin may be worn.
  - 3. A red, white and blue American flag pin, approved by the affected division chief, may be worn with a skill identifier pin in the same location.
  - 4. Veteran Service Pin: Any honorably discharged veteran of the United States Army, Airforce, Marine Corps or Navy is eligible to receive a pin; discharge documents serve as the basis for qualification. When worn the veteran pin replaces the U.S. flag pin. Everyday wear is optional for qualifying staff. For uniformity, honor guard members will wear the U.S. flag pin when wearing their honor guard uniform.
- C. Duty Belt, Body Armor, and Supplemental Clothing and Accessories
  - 1. The Sheriff's Office provides duty belts and accessories to sworn employees based upon their job classification. Each division chief designates the style, type, and manufacturer of duty belt equipment, and is responsible for enforcing the criteria for wearing duty belt equipment.
  - 2. Body armor is issued to all uniformed personnel in direct enforcement positions.
    - a. Uniformed employees in direct enforcement positions are required to wear body armor while working in an enforcement capacity.
    - b. Deputies are not authorized to wear body armor in an external



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manner, without the approved external vest carrier, except in emergency situations.

### **3. External Vest Carriers**

- a. Body armor may be worn in an approved external vest carrier while wearing a Class B or tactical uniform. The external vest carrier must display a metal badge and metal name plate but may not be worn with skill pins or award ribbons.
  - b. Only department-issued equipment is authorized to be carried or worn on an approved external vest carrier. Authorized equipment includes:
    - 1) AR single magazine pouch
    - 2) Handgun double magazine pouch
    - 3) Handcuff case
    - 4) Body-worn camera
    - 5) Radio
    - 6) *Taser™* strike plate
  - c. The external body armor carrier is authorized for emergency use for all uniform types and over non-uniform clothing.
4. Any clothing that is worn under the uniform that is visible (e.g., shirts, turtlenecks, crew-collared undershirts, socks, etc.) must be solid black in color with no visible embroidery, printing, or other graphics visible.

## **V. Authorized Accessories**

### **A. Headgear**

- 1. Authorized headgear approved by the Sheriff includes the following:
  - c. A black baseball-style hat embroidered with a BCSO sheriff's star emblem centered on the front (the baseball hat is not authorized for wear with a Class A uniform).
    - 1. A deputy may elect, at their expense, to have their last name or radio number embroidered on the rear of the hat when approved or authorized by their division chief. No other embroidery, pin, or adornment on the hat is

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authorized.

- d. A black U.S. Navy-style "watch cap," with or without a sheriff's star or other sheriff's insignia.
- e. A Class A black felt hat with a metal oval "Sheriff" emblem, adorned with silver acorns.
- f. Protective helmet, with a reflective sheriff's star decal centered on the front, and reflective employee badge number centered on the rear near the bottom edge.
  - 1. Uniformed employees are to wear helmets when directed to do so by their supervisor.
  - 2. Helmets may be worn at the employee's discretion when necessary to protect the employee.

**B. Uniform Outerwear**

- 1. All outerwear, except a traffic safety vest, is to be solid black in color. Outerwear assigned to uniformed employees is to receive shoulder patches, a star patch on the left breast, and a name strip of the employee's first (and middle, if desired) initial and last name on the right breast. Removable liners may be worn stand-alone by uniformed employees, provided they receive the same patch markings as their outer jacket.
- 2. Outerwear includes, but is not limited to coats, jackets, windbreakers, sweaters, and gloves.
  - a. Gloves are not issued and are an elective purchase by employees.
- 3. Neon-yellow, ANSI-certified reflective traffic vests are issued to each sworn employee who works in an operational field environment (e.g., patrol, extra-duty, etc.).

**C. Footwear**

- 1. All uniformed employees are to wear plain black footwear, without color accents, appropriate for their assignment. Class A uniforms require solid black footwear with a polished toe. Open toe shoes, sandals, and high heels are not authorized for any sworn employees.

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**VI. Other Attire**

- A. The Sheriff may authorize the wearing of other clothing (e.g., polo shirts, vests, etc.) that display a sheriff's star, logo, or any wording that identifies the wearer as a sheriff's employee or member of a sheriff's division, section, or unit. Each respective division chief is responsible to determine when an employee may wear this clothing, and if it will be provided at department expense.
- B. Civilian clothing is authorized for certain positions not requiring the wearing of a uniform. Division chiefs have the authority to grant permission for employees to wear civilian clothes based upon the employee's position or assignment.
  - 1. Civilian clothing worn for normal duty assignments is to meet, at a minimum, the generally accepted current definition of "business casual."
    - a. Shorts, t-shirts, torn garments, etc., are not acceptable apparel for normal duty assignments but may be worn if approved by an employee's supervisor in order to perform specific work-related tasks (undercover investigators assigned to the Boulder County Drug Task Force are exempt).
    - b. Civilian clothing worn for normal duty assignments shall not have any visible wording or markings that is, either explicitly or through innuendo, sexual, violent, or derogatory.

By Order of the Sheriff:

Curtis Johnson  
Curtis Johnson

November 27, 2023  
Date