	Matthews Police Department		
	General Order: PERSONAL APPEARANCE/ UNIFORM STANDARDS	Section 03: Equipment and Personal Appearance	Order #: 04-05
	Review: Annually in June by the Admin Division Commander	Issue Date: 04/08/2024 (Supersedes 04-05 dated 10/01/2022)	

I. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this General Order is to establish policies and procedures for assuring personal appearance standards. Nothing in this Order shall conflict with the "Town of Matthews Employee Dress Policy".

II. CROSS-REF:

NCLEA 1.10 Agency Issued Property/Equipment NCLEA 1.25 Appearance

CALEA STANDARDS: 17.5.3, 26.1.1, 41.3.5

Town of Matthew Dress Code and Personal Appearance Policy

III. DISCUSSION:

IV. POLICY:

It the policy of the Matthews Police Department to have in place an understanding of the expectations of the officer's appearance while on duty.

V. DEFINITIONS:

Class "A" - Class "A" uniform shall consist of the normal dress blue uniform with long sleeve shirt and tie.


Class "B" – Class "B" uniform shall consist of the normal dress blue uniform (short or long-sleeved) or the ripstop reflex pants and the undershirt (battle shirt) with outer ballistic vest carrier.

Class "C" – Class "C" uniform shall consist of the khaki BDU style pant and the black polo shirt (TRAINING UNIFORM)

Business Attire – The business attire shall consist of dress pants, dress shirt & tie for men and slacks & blouse or dress for women

VI. GENERAL:

- A. Personnel on duty shall wear uniforms or other clothing in accordance with established departmental requirements and town policy.
- B. Departmental uniforms/equipment as required in this policy shall only be worn/displayed by employees while on duty, while appearing for on and off duty jobs requiring the wearing of uniform, or while enroute to work or to home after work.
- C. Except for brief stops of personal necessity (i.e., brief meals, stopping for groceries or medications, etc.), employees are prohibited from wearing/displaying DEPARTMENTAL UNIFORMS / EQUIPMENT PUBLICLY WHEN NOT IN CONFORMANCE WITH THIS POLICY.

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VII. HAIR GROOMING:

- A. All personnel whose duties bring them in contact with members of the public shall maintain a well-groomed appearance.
- B. Hair shall be styled according to the following guidelines:
 - 1. Hair must be clean, neat, and combed.
 - 2. Hair length or style shall not interfere with the effective use of any item of police equipment and shall not extend below the top of the shirt collar.
 - 3. Sideburns shall be neatly trimmed and shall not extend lower than the lowest point of the ear. Sideburns shall not flare and will be trimmed horizontally across the bottom.
 - 4. Female uniformed officers' hair extending beyond the collar shall not be worn loosely but shall be fashioned in a bun or braided neatly. Large pins or ties which may appear unprofessional or which may be used as a weapon against the officer may not be worn.
 - 5. Wigs or hairpieces are permitted if they conform to the above standards for natural hair.

VIII. FACIAL HAIR:

A neatly groomed and maintained mustache, goatee, or beard is authorized for all employees. The following appearance standards shall apply to all employees. Employees in positions or assignments wherein a beard would be inappropriate or impede the operation of the position will adhere to the standards set for the assignment or position. Beards may only exceed the parameters of this policy when the Division Commander and the Chief of Police have granted an exception.

- A. Sworn employees' beards must be worn with a mustache, and the facial hair must not be longer than a quarter (1/4) inch in length. The beard will be uniform in length and no portion of the beard may be noticeably longer than the rest. Beards or goatees must be a natural color and natural in shape with no patterns or designs (i.e., no "chin strap" beards). No braids, bows, or other accessories are allowed in facial hair.
- C. Personnel who are required to properly operate and wear a respiratory device as an essential function of their position will be required to arrive clean shaven for any required fit-testing of respirators. Fit-testing and subsequent use of any tight-fitting respirators will be done without facial hair that may come between the sealing surface of the facepiece and the face or that interferes with the valve function.
- D. Personnel who are required to properly operate and wear a respiratory device as an essential function of their position will be required to shave their beards entirely in


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anticipation of an operational need for use of the gas mask (i.e., development of protests likely to become violent). Sworn employees may be ordered to remove their beard immediately and must have the necessary equipment available to do so in a timely manner.


- D. Mustaches are permitted; however, the mustache shall be neatly trimmed and shall not extend over the top lip, or vertically or horizontally beyond the corner of the mouth where the lips join.
- E. All employees shall maintain a professional appearance, regardless of the actual length of their facial hair.
- F. Sworn employees shall not claim to be in a perpetual state of growth to avoid shaving on a regular basis. Facial hair must be neatly trimmed during growth stages to avoid uneven (patchy) growth patterns.
- G. The wearing of facial hair will remain at the discretion of the Chief of Police
- H. Supervisors will ensure employees adhere to these standards and maintain a professional appearance. Employees who state a medical condition inhibits their ability to adhere to these standards will be referred to the Human Resources Department.
 - 1. Medical exemptions shall be on a case-by-case basis and require a medical accommodation issued by a licensed medical provider, reviewed, and approved by HR.
 - 2. If the medical accommodation is approved, facial hair will be kept trimmed and neat, and will not exceed the approval restrictions.

IX. TATTOOS, BRANDS AND SCARIFICATION

- A. All MPD employees must maintain standards of appearance that project a professional image to the public. Tattoos, brands, or scarification which depict violence, are obscene in nature, contain sexually explicit language, or in any way ridicule, malign, disparage or express bias against any individual or group are not in keeping with MPD's professional image, are inappropriate for the work environment, and may undermine public trust and confidence. All employees' tattoos, brands, or scarification are subject to the standards and review process set forth in this order.
- B. Employees are permitted to have visible tattoos, brands or scarifications provided they do not violate the following conditions:
 - 1. Visible tattoos, brands or scarification on the head, face, neck, or scalp are prohibited.
 - 2. An employee is allowed to have a tattoo located behind the employee's ear or nape of the neck, provided it does not exceed 1 inch in length by 1 inch in width and does not violate any other section of this order.

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3. Tattoos, brands, or scarification that depict violence, nudity, sexual acts or organs, or lewd images or content are not permitted to be visible while on duty or while on any Town of Matthews property regardless of duty status.
 4. Tattoos, brands, or scarification that do not meet the conditions of this directive must be covered by clothing that meets the guidelines of this order, i.e., long sleeve uniform shirt or tattoo covering make-up. Tattoo sleeves are not permissible. Any other method of covering tattoos, brands or scarifications must be approved by the Chief of Police.
 5. The class B or C uniform sleeve may not be altered in any regard to display or conceal any portion of a tattoo, brand or scarification.
 6. The employee's chain of command is responsible for ensuring that any tattoos, brands, or scarifications which are inappropriate, or do not meet the restrictions outlined above are properly covered.
 7. Employees who disagree with their chain of command regarding the appropriateness or inappropriateness of a tattoo brand or scarification may seek a review by the Chief of Police.
- C. Tattoos, brands, or scarification that detract from the professional appearance of the employee or violates the standards of decency and morality are strictly prohibited.
 - D. Tattoos, brands, or scarification that depict "scorekeeping" related to police activity or signify membership in unofficial law enforcement or militia groups are strictly prohibited, regardless of location on the body.
 - E. Tattoos, brands, or scarification of the above nature or content do not conform with MPD's values and undermine public trust and the trust of co-workers. Such tattoos, brands, or scarification would negatively affect the reputation of the employee and bring MPD into disrepute.
 - F. Employees identified as having a tattoo, brand, or scarification which may be restricted under this directive will be reported to the Internal Affairs Unit. The tattoo, brand, or scarification may be reviewed by the Chief of Police and HR as part of the administrative investigation.
 - G. The Chief of Police or designee shall be the final authority in determining if a tattoo, brand, or scarification is considered offensive or inappropriate.


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X. JEWELRY:

- A. Civic pins, fraternity pins, etc. shall not be worn with uniforms.
- B. Only service pins recognizing certification levels, awards, or special assignment recognition, as approved by the Chief of Police, are to be worn.
- C. Female officers may wear single earrings that are small ball or disk-type with small posts. The color may be silver or gold. Hoop-style earrings that could be grabbed onto shall not be worn.
- D. One bracelet, silver or gold, not to exceed one-half inch in width may be worn. A necklace may be worn provided it is not visible.
- E. Engagement or wedding rings or bands and school or professional organizational rings may be worn with the uniform provided they are of a size or style which would interfere with the performance of duty.

XI. UNIFORMS:

- A. Clothing: Officers shall wear only the assigned uniform of the day and it shall appear in a clean and neat manner.
 - 1. Officers shall be issued the necessary uniforms required by this General Order at the expense of the department. The Quartermaster will be the point of contact for such issuance and purchasing of such uniforms.
 - 2. Officers will be issued the following:
 - a. One (1) short-sleeved and One (1) long-sleeved Class "A" type shirts
 - b. Four (4) S/S Battle Shirts and Four (4) L/S Battle Shirts
 - c. One (1) pair of duty pants Class "A" type pants
 - d. Four (4) pairs of Reflex pants
 - e. One (1) winter jacket
 - f. One (1) Sam Browne duty belt with four (4) belt keepers, Double Magazine Pouch, OC Spray pouch, Radio Holder, ASP holder, Handcuff Case, Buckle, and Tourniquet with holder
 - g. One (1) duty holster
 - h. Two (2) pair of handcuffs with cuff case
 - i. One (1) Officer Badge
 - j. One (1) pair of footwear. Town may purchase or reimburse employees for one pair of shoes/boots up to \$200.00, per fiscal year. Shoes/Boots must be black and slip resistant. Boots with over the ankle support with ½ inch heel is recommended. Officers may purchase from the onsite boot truck located at Public Works once each year, through reimbursement request, or P-card purchase. Officers are free to purchase from a vendor of choice. Reference Town of Matthews Safety & Uniform Footwear SOP.

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- k. Two (2) Polo style (Class C) shirts one being long sleeve and one being short-sleeved.
- l. One (1) pair of Khaki BDU (Class C) style pants
- m. One (1) Ball Cap
- n. One (1) Toboggan style hat
- o. One (1) soft body armor ballistic vest
- p. One (1) Raincoat
- q. One (1) Traffic Vest
- r. One (1) pair of traffic gloves
- s. One (1) Whistle
- t. One (1) Uniform Tie
- u. One (1) Class "A" Hat

B. At no time shall an officer purchase any type of uniforms or equipment where reimbursement is expected on their part without the permission of a Division Commander. If such permission is granted by a Division Commander it shall be requested in writing and not worn until approved by the Division Commander.

C. Uniform classes:


1. Class "A" uniforms are the issued long-sleeved-shirt uniforms with a necktie.
2. Class "B" uniforms are the normal dress blue uniform (short or long-sleeved) or the ripstop reflex pants and the undershirt (battle shirt, short or long-sleeved) with outer ballistic vest carrier or concealable vest carrier. ONLY, white, navy blue, or black t-shirts or mock turtlenecks shall be worn under the Class "B" uniform, consistent with the shirt color.
3. Class "C" uniforms are "Training/Utility" uniforms-department issued golf/polo style shirts with approved khaki BDU style pants. Regular on-duty use of Class "C" uniforms must be approved by the Division Commander.
4. "CID-Casual" shall consist of dress shirt and slacks – dress or khaki, or similar style for women. "CID – Business" shall consist of dress pants, dress shirt & tie for men, dress slacks & blouse or dress for women.
5. "CID – Tactical" shall consist of operationally appropriate attire, as approved by the CID supervisor or a member of the Command Staff.
6. Non-Sworn Division Uniforms – any department-issued uniform shirts, slacks, jackets, etc.

D. Appropriate Dress: Unless otherwise authorized by a Division Commander, the following shall be considered the appropriate uniform for these purposes:

1. Regular Duty – Class "A", Class "B", CID (either style), or Non-sworn Division Uniforms as authorized by this policy.
2. Grand Jury – For uniformed officers, Class "A" or CID business attire only, for CID personnel, Class "A", or CID business attire only. Supervisor-approved


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Personal Appearance / Uniform Standards

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Non-Sworn Division Uniforms for those personnel.

3. District Court – For uniformed officers “Class “A”, “Class “B” uniform, or CID business attire only, for CID Class “A”, Class “B” or business attire only.
4. Training – This Will depend upon the nature & location of the training course as well as whether the officer shall be in the presence of the public.
5.
 - a. If while otherwise on duty, the Regular Duty uniform shall apply.
 - b. For internal training at the Public Safety facility, personal clothing, within the bounds of the towns’ Dress Policy, are allowed except when the training requires the officer to be present and assessable to members of the public during the training period (ie. out-of-doors training, public-accessible classroom training, etc.)
 - c. For external training locations, except for such training which warrants otherwise and as authorized by the officer’s supervisor or Division Commander, Class “A”, Class “B”, Class “C” or CID dress are required. An exception may be granted by the supervisor for training course locations where the officer is not in the presence of the public (ie. Justice Academy); however, when the training schedule requires the officer be present and accessible to members of the public during the training period (ie. out-of-doors training, public-accessible classroom training, etc.) the uniform requirement applies.
6. Public Speaking / Program Appearances – for town meetings, forums, appearance before assembled public groups (ie. Chamber of Commerce, etc.), Class “A”, Class “B” or, if appropriate, CID business only.
7. Public Events – for department/town events, such as Beachfest, Matthews Alive, or department scheduled events (i.e., National Night Out.) Class “A”, Class “B” are allowed. Allowable dress codes will be posted with the event post. Class “C” uniforms are not allowed for Special Events.
8. Hats – The daily wear of the uniform hat is optional. The department issued uniform hat shall be worn when:
 - a. Directing traffic for a formal events period, or
 - b. Attending special ceremonies (i.e., funerals, memorials, etc.) in uniform.
 - c. Department Issued ball caps with “POLICE” or “Matthews Police” or toboggans are authorized when an officer will be outdoors in inclement weather for an extended time. These non-standard hats are not to be worn continuously while in uniform nor when attending official public events.

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XII. APPEARANCE AND EQUIPMENT OF GENERAL INVESTIGATIVE PERSONNEL:


- A. The appearance of general investigative personnel shall conform to standards of dress acceptable in the business community.
- B. General investigative personnel shall carry on their person while on duty their issued weapon, handcuffs, and communications equipment.
- C. Exceptions to this section may be authorized by the Division Commander for personnel serving in special operations or details.

XIII. EQUIPMENT OF PLAINCLOTHES PERSONNEL PARTICIPATING IN RAIDS OR SERVICE OF SEARCH WARRANTS:

- A. All plainclothes personnel participating in service of search warrants or raids shall wear their soft body armor or raid jacket that should be clearly marked with "POLICE".
- B. All plainclothes personnel, when on duty or acting in an official capacity, shall carry on his/her person a service weapon, handcuffs, and/or two-way radio.

XIV. ISSUED SOFT BODY ARMOR:

- A. Officers are provided with soft body armor for personal protection and are required to wear it when performing uniformed police-related functions unless an exception is granted by the Chief of Police.
- B. Soft body armor shall be worn when in uniform, whether on or off duty. Exceptions will be granted only by the Chief of Police.
- C. Soft body armor shall be worn at all department events, town events, festivals, where uniforms are required unless an exception is granted through the posting of the event.
- D. Soft body armor shall be worn during all training classes/events where a uniform is worn except when exempted by a supervisor prior to the class/course.
- E. Officers are to advise their supervisor of the need for repair or replacement of assigned body armor.
- F. Soft body armor may be worn underneath the uniform shirt (traditional style) or in an approved external vest system. Only approved pouches may be utilized on the external vest carrier. Officers are not allowed to add extra pouches/equipment to their vests.
- G. External vests are approved for regular duty. External vests are not approved for any event or duty which would call for a Class "A" uniform, or where the officer is making a public speaking appearance.

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H. External vest carriers will be allowed during festival/special type events where officers are exposed to weather elements for most of their duty time. This also includes off-duty assignments in which the officer is wearing the Class “B” uniform.

XV. CIVILIAN & VOLUNTEER PERSONNEL APPAREL:

- A. Civilian personnel shall maintain a neat, well-groomed appearance and shall wear the appropriate uniform for their assignment.
- B. Citizen Volunteers shall maintain a neat, well-groomed appearance and shall wear the department-designed uniform for their assignment.
- C. Police Reserve Officers shall wear the department-designed uniforms for their assignment. Police Reserve Officers who are former full-time members of the department who separated in good standing are authorized, during certain formal department & public programs, to wear the Class “A” uniform and rank insignia of their former full-time position. Such programs shall be identified by the Reserve Officer Program Coordinator or a member of the Command Staff.

XVII. USE OF TOBACCO:

- A. Tobacco products shall not be used at/within locations where such use is prohibited by policy or Mecklenburg County Board of Health rules.
- B. Tobacco products shall not be used while in direct contact or view with the public, while engaged in traffic direction or control, or when the use of tobacco is in violation of any law or local ordinances.
- C. Officers shall not use tobacco products within a departmental-issued vehicle.
- D. Tobacco materials shall be discarded in a safe appropriate manner, so as not to expose any persons to the by-products being disposed of.

XVIII. BODY ARMOR OUTER CARRIER:

- A. Officers are provided with an outer carrier for their assigned body armor for personal protection. Officers are not required to wear the outer carrier as part of their daily uniform, however, should the officer not wear the outer carrier, that officer shall wear the issued vest by utilizing the concealable carrier under the uniform shirt.
- B. Officers will be issued the following Molle equipment that will be utilized on the exterior vest in a location the officer deems best suitable for the day-to-day operation:
 - 1. Double Magazine Pouch
 - 2. OC Spray Pouch
 - 3. Radio Holder
 - 4. Double Handcuff Case