

Northamptonshire Police



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Standards of Appearance Policy

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Introduction

Northamptonshire Police is committed to providing the best possible service to the people of Northamptonshire. We all fight crime and protect people and in line with the Chief Constables leadership standards, we all have a responsibility to enhance confidence in Northamptonshire Police and present a professional image of our organisation. It is therefore imperative that the wearing of uniform is consistent throughout the organisation. Feedback at public consultation events reinforces the importance to the public of smart appearance by police officers and staff.

Staff not wearing uniform also have a responsibility to present a professional image of the organisation. We also have a responsibility to provide protection to our staff. The uniform issued to staff and the appropriate wearing of that uniform forms part of the health and safety risk assessment for staff.

This Policy is intended to strike a proportionate balance between self-expression and the need to maintain role-sensitive professional standards in dress and appearance.

Northamptonshire Police maintains that this policy is necessary due to the nature of our business and is proportionate, in that it only applies during an individual's hours of work or whilst undertaking the business of Northamptonshire Police.

This policy relates to the wearing of existing uniform and seeks to promote consistency in how it is worn. Through the work of the Uniform Advisory Group, the Force will continue to seek improved uniform and equipment to match changing needs and will issue further guidance as and when such equipment is available.

Where the role being undertaken requires more casual clothing for operational purposes this will be specifically authorised by a supervisor.

Legislative Compliance

Police officers and members of staff in a non-uniformed role also have a responsibility to present a professional image of the organisation, in line with the College of Policing's Code of Ethics.

This document provides you with clear and comprehensive guidance on your appearance, to present a professional image, achieve and maintain standards while also allowing for a level of self-expression. It has been developed by a

group including the Police Federation of England and Wales and Unison, led by one of the NPCC representatives at the College of Policing's Professional Committee, Chief Constable Simon Cole. This work has been supported by the College's Professional Committee

Policy Statement

The following standards apply to all members of Northamptonshire Police, unless otherwise dictated by operational needs (i.e. covert operations). Deviating from these standards without justification may result in you facing disciplinary proceedings.

All officers and staff – specifically covert operations staff – should dress appropriately for their specific job role, unless otherwise dictated by operational needs:

- dress in keeping with the professional image outlined in this guidance – clothing should be clean and neatly pressed
- maintain high standards of personal hygiene and grooming
- do not wear anything which represents a risk to health and safety
- do not wear any items which are likely to bring the force into disrepute – this includes potentially offensive badges, logos or motifs.

Supervisors

As supervisor, you have a responsibility to ensure that there is a robust and consistent approach towards this guidance, rather than your personal interpretation of it. You are expected to challenge officers and staff who do not present a professional image of the force in line with the guidance.

Set an example with your own high standards of appearance. Ensure groups of uniformed staff and officers working together in public view are dressed uniformly as far as is practicable, subject to operational commitments, religious observance/cultural needs, medical, maternity or health reasons.

Uniformed Police Officers and Police Staff

All officers/staff performing duty where they are likely to come into contact with the public, other agencies or partner organisations, will at all times wear uniform unless specifically authorised by a supervisor not to do so for operational reasons, or their role is designated as a plain clothes role or on recuperative/restricted duties where there is a clearly stated medical reason not to wear uniform.

Officers must not wear uniform, or any part of it, at any time when off duty, other than travelling to and from work unless properly authorised.

The following list outlines the required dress and appearance for uniformed officers and police staff. Where the instruction relates only to police officers, this will be stated under the relevant heading.

Northamptonshire Police understands there will be occasions, where, because of cultural or religious needs, flexibility will need to be applied. For example, a Sikh or Muslim officer may wear alternative headgear, or an item of jewellery, which is of religious significance, may be permitted. Any member of staff who wishes to adapt their uniform appearance on cultural or religious grounds should consult their line manager in the first instance.

Uniform dress code

Keep all items of uniform clean and in good repair. It is your responsibility to ensure lost/damaged items of uniform are replaced. Unless permitted to wear plain or alternative clothes, eg, on account of an officer's pregnancy or disability, uniformed staff will wear uniform at all times when on duty or at work.

Only wear police-issue items of equipment on the uniform belt. Wear utility belts over the trousers or skirt and fleece, blouson or high-visibility jacket for health and safety reasons and to ensure uniformity.

Do not wear large bunches of keys hanging from the belt to avoid risk of injury, unless there is an operational requirement (eg, custody). Insignia/epaulettes of rank or post must be worn and visible at all times.

Officers and staff in specialist departments may wear issue coveralls and polo shirts or dark blue shirts, as per the scale of issue, at their discretion, however, keep such clothing clean and tidy.

Do not wear uniform when appearing on social media or internet sites in an off-duty situation or in any other off-duty capacity without prior authority of a manager.

You may wear charity badges/patches with permission of the Chief Constable. They must not be too large and must not be in place of or obscure official police insignia, or pose a health and safety risk to the Officer or the public.

Non-uniform dress code

Individuals wearing plain clothes for their role should ensure that their standard of dress and appearance reflects the same high standard required of uniform staff.

You must have your ID card on display while on police premises (remove visible identification when away from police premises) and consider the appropriateness

of the lanyard.

Dress in business wear which is smart and clean. Business suits or an appropriate smart jacket are the expected forms of dress whenever you are representing the force at events, at court or in contact with the public through your role.

Individuals engaged in covert operations where their identity must be concealed may dress to suit the circumstances.

The wearing of PPE by plain-clothed officers and staff will be according to the risk assessment of their duty and deployment.

Warrant/identification cards

Carry your warrant/identification at all times and wear it outside clothing in a prominent place, usually in a lanyard or a name badge holder, at all times while on police premises.

Report the loss or theft of a card to a line manager immediately due to security implications.

When visiting certain countries on vacation, seek guidance in relation to the current threat levels and whether you should take your warrant/identification card.

Standards for a Professional Appearance

Hair/Facial Hair

Uniformed staff

Wear your hair so that it is cut or secured above the collar and ears and is neat and tidy. It should not present a health and safety hazard. Any hair accessory must be plain in design and black or navy blue in colour. Extreme and vivid hair colouring is not permitted (unless for cultural or religious needs).

Do not dye it in conspicuously unnatural colours.

For uniformed staff, pigtails and ponytails are unacceptable due to officer safety implications.

Non-uniformed staff

Ensure your appearance reflects the same high standard required of all other members of the force, dependent on working environment (if the role is not one which requires face-to-face contact with the public, there is room for discretion).

All Staff

The face should be either clean-shaven or facial hair should be neat and tidy. Facial hair must not be dyed in conspicuously unnatural colours (unless for cultural or religious needs).

As a uniformed service, facial hair should not be in a style which makes members of the public feel uncomfortable or intimidated. An "unshaven" appearance is not desirable unless you are growing a beard or moustache. This applies to 'designer stubble' but does not apply where there is a genuine medical reason not to shave.

Jewellery

Operational staff

There is a potential health and safety implication with wearing jewellery. You are permitted to wear a watch, a band ring (eg, a wedding, civil partnership, engagement, eternity or modest signet ring), small stud earrings and a necklace (provided this is worn under clothing and is not visible).

You may wear other jewellery with permission and on a case-by-case basis. This could be on medical grounds, eg, an alert bracelet, or religious grounds, eg, Sikh staff are permitted to carry a miniature Kirpan out of sight beneath outer clothing.

It should be noted that Northamptonshire Police will not be liable for damage or loss to any jewellery worn

All other staff

You may wear jewellery but must maintain the professional image of the force. Individual pieces of jewellery may be subject to health and safety assessment and you may be required to remove these while at work or carrying out tasks.

It should be noted that Northamptonshire Police will not be liable for damage or loss to any jewellery worn

Facial Studs and Piercings

Facial studs, including tongue studs and piercings will not be worn. Any cultural or religious reasons for needing to wear facial jewellery should be brought to the attention of a supervisor.

Tattoos

Independent research conducted by Ipsos Mori on behalf of the Police Federation of England and Wales in 2016 found that members of the public are largely accepting of Police Officers and Staff with visible tattoos. Visible tattoos are unacceptable if they could reasonably be interpreted as discriminatory or offensive and/or indicate attitudes or views inconsistent with Northamptonshire Police's values and Standards of Professional Behaviour.

Careful consideration will be given by the organization to any tattoo on the neck, face or hands in deciding if it is acceptable. This includes considering the size, nature and prominence of the tattoo.

Keep this guidance in mind when deciding whether to have such a tattoo.

Make-up

You are permitted to wear minimal make-up appropriate to your natural skin tone or in connection with your religion/faith e.g. the Bindi. You may also wear make-up to conceal a facial disfigurement or significant blemish.

Uniformed operational staff, for health and safety reasons, should keep fingernails trimmed short and clean. You may not wear any jewellery or attachment on the nails. Nail polish must be clear or of subtle colour, with the same colour used for all nails.

Spectacles/Sunglasses

Staff who wear spectacles at work should ensure that the style of frame is appropriate to role. Vivid, highly conspicuous or highly ornate frames will not be permitted. Frames should be of a neutral colour and of discreet design. For information about spectacles, see the Spectacles Provision Policy.

Prescription spectacles worn during operational activity, including roles that involve direct contact with the public, must have lenses made of safety plastic and not glass, for health and safety reasons.

Lenses of sunglasses must not be mirrored or too dark and should be made of material to minimise risk of injury in the event of an accident. Frames should be plain and neutral in colour and style.

Remove your sunglasses when talking to a member of the public and inside a building unless it is necessary to continue wearing them for medical reasons or because they are prescription sunglasses. In such cases, consult a supervisor. You may need to provide supporting evidence, e.g., a medical note from the GP

or a request from Occupational Health.

Standards for Uniform and Work Attire

Name badges and identity cards

Name badges will be worn in a manner that they can be easily seen and read (i.e. at chest height and not on the waistband).

Identity cards must be carried at all times when on duty. Lanyards with quick release clips will be worn for id/entacards.

All members of staff will wear a name badge with logo indicating a both individual's first and last name (initials alone are not permitted). First names can be shortened to preferred name, but 'nicknames' are not permitted.

Badges must not have rank, job title or unit on them. The only exceptions are Chaplains or Police Surgeons

All employees, whether permanent or agency, must wear a badge with the Force logo.

The name badge will be worn:

- (a) When on duty undertaking the normal day-to-day role;
- (b) When on police premises.

Exceptions to this are:

- (a) Plain-clothed officers/staff undertaking operational duties away from police premises when those duties make it inappropriate to be identified as a police officer;
- (b) Detective Officers/staff whose core role requires anonymity, other than when on police premises;
- (c) Uniform personnel whose operational demands and clothing make it inappropriate to wear personal name badges.

Carry your warrant/identification at all times. Always, wear it outside clothing in

a prominent place, usually in a lanyard or a name badge holder, at all times while on police premises.

Report the loss or theft of a card to a line manager immediately due to security implications.

When visiting certain countries on vacation, seek guidance in relation to the current threat levels and whether you should take your warrant/identification card.

Medals, Ribbons and Embroidery

Wear only medals to which you are entitled. When medals are worn, they may be court-mounted.

Officers entitled to wear medals may wear their ribbons on shirts, blousons and tunics. Medal ribbons will be attached to Fleece jackets to the left chest area as worn, positioned centrally immediately below the 'Police' badge and above the blue and silver chequered band. Medal ribbons will be attached to Uniform tunics to the upper left chest area as worn, positioned centrally above the pocket flap. The maximum depth measurement of a medal ribbon is 1.3cms.

When wearing tunics (other than for short-term loan occasions), officers of the rank of sergeant will wear embroidered sergeants' chevrons. The upper point of the chevron will be attached to the sleeve 18cm below the sleeve head seam on a male tunic and 16.5cm on a female tunic.

Position medal ribbons just above the left breast pocket flap of the tunic, centred over the pocket button, in order of importance from right to left, i.e., the Queen's Golden Jubilee medal first, followed by the Diamond Jubilee and then the Police Long Service and Good Conduct medal. The General Service Medal and other military medals should precede the jubilee medals.

Retain police medals of any description issued/awarded to you at all times while you remain in service to ensure that you are able to comply with any force requirement to wear medals at relevant events and occasions. For that reason, do not sell police medals or otherwise dispose of them while in service.

Headgear

Headgear is an integral part of police uniform and an important element in enabling the public to recognise you. It is compulsory for uniformed staff to wear force-issued headgear while performing public duties. This not only projects a professional image but, where appropriate, assists in the health and safety of staff.

The following also applies:

- except on religious and medical grounds officers, PCSOs and members of the Special Constabulary will wear force-issued headgear
- officers and uniformed staff in police vehicles may remove their headgear while in the vehicle but must wear it outside the vehicle at all times unless operational commitments prevent this, eg, chasing suspects or saving lives, home visits, severe weather such as high winds (police officers and PCSOs riding police pedal cycles while on duty are to wear pedal cycle safety helmets and police motorcyclists will wear force-issue motorcycle helmets when on patrol)
- you may remove headgear when providing television interviews to avoid shading the eyes and when posing for non-operational photographs
- Sikh officers and uniformed staff may wear a black or dark navy blue turban with a modified cap badge
- Muslim officers and staff may wear a black or dark navy blue headscarf/hijab
- Sikh officers and staff who wear turbans are exempt by law from having to wear motorcycle helmets and are also therefore exempt from having to wear pedal cycle safety helmets while on duty or at work, however, a risk assessment will be undertaken in relation to the specific role to be performed, including any potential communications issues
- officers and uniformed staff may wear prayer caps at the appropriate time and when the need arises while on duty
- specialist headgear such as baseball caps and black woollen hats may only be worn as per the scale of issue for the role you are undertaking, for example, PSU staff, and can only be worn in connection with that role.

High visibility cap covers are available for the Flat Cap and Bowler Hat, for Roads Policing officers only.

Bump caps are no longer to be worn.

Baseball Hats (police officers only)

Baseball hats (not Bump Caps) will only be worn by authorised firearms officers when involved in a firearms incident, or Public Order officers when suitably deployed or training. These caps are not to be worn, ordered or supplied for any other use by any other role where this item is not part of their uniform entitlement.

Legwear

Police issue uniform trousers/skirts will be worn. The generally issued trousers are now the national standard of cotton, with cargo leg pockets.

Police issue uniform skirts can be worn at the discretion of female officers.

For those with specific needs (skin conditions/allergies etc) other trousers and skirts may be supplied based on medical advice. Cotton trousers have reduced this requirement in recent years.

Special trousers are worn by those in several roles, and these appear on their kit-lists, such as those in Armed Policing, dog handlers, specialist search.

Where difficulties regarding trouser fit arise, officers and staff should contact Force Stores in the first instance to arrange for a fitting – if required, special measure garments may then be ordered.

Shirts

White Shirts

When wearing a long-sleeved shirt, the sleeves must be fastened at the wrist or folded neatly just above the elbow to maintain a tidy appearance.

Ties must be worn in conjunction with the white uniform shirt (see ties)

White shirts and tie may be worn by uniformed officers and staff who do not wear body armour for the predominance of their tour of duty.

Office-based staff and those attending class-based training courses may wear the UBA shirt as their garment, as the UBA has been adopted by NPCC as national uniform.

Under Body Armour shirts

- The UBA shirt is not to be worn as an outer garment when outside in public as body armour will be worn 24/7 in most circumstances.
- When body armour wearers are engaged on duties inside and have temporarily removed the body armour, lanyards with name badges and warrant cards will be worn without fail, for reasons of identification and accountability. (*except by officers when authorised by a supervisor when engaged on a POLSA search)
- Officers and staff attending training of a more physical nature at FHQ (firearms, UDT etc) are permitted to wear UBA shirts as an outer garment whilst training, but must wear lanyard, ID and name badge when not training, i.e. on breaks, in the FHQ Restaurant and en route to or from training.
- Long sleeved UBA shirts are available to order by anyone who wears a UBA

shirt, but the issue of long sleeved UBA shirts will be included in the entitlement quantity

Epaulettes

Where provided, epaulettes with identifying letters and numerals or insignia of rank must be worn and must be correct and visible at all times. It is acceptable for either metallic or embroidered epaulettes to be worn.

When wearing a utility vest and epaulettes underneath are not readily visible, an extra epaulette should be worn on utility vest spare radio loop to aid identification of warrant number and rank.

Ties

Staff wearing the black operational shirt will not be required to wear a tie. In all other cases, you should wear a force issue tie, unless permission has been given to remove this due to weather or staff are on a meal break away from public view.

Tie Pins

One small tie pin/enamel badge may be worn on the tie. Designs should be discrete and free from political bias. Charity/Blue Line patches may be worn on stab vests

Tights and Socks

Male officers/staff will wear socks, and female officers/staff will wear socks, tights or stockings when in uniform. Tights/stockings must be black or neutral. Socks must be black or dark blue.

Fleeces

Where issued, fleeces can be worn at the discretion of individual officers. No other garment will be worn as a replacement for a fleece.

Body Armour (police officers and PCSOs only)

The wearing of body armour by operational patrol officers and staff is mandatory.

Officers who cannot wear the protective body armour due to health problems should be temporarily restricted from operational duties and referred to Occupational Health

The standard issue armour will be worn overtly by uniformed officers. It must

however be worn under reflective or weather proof jacket, including force issue fleece jacket. The vest must be correctly adjusted and securely fastened. Armour must be worn as close to the body as possible to maximize the coverage and to avoid secondary missiles if struck by a bullet.

The Force issues two hi visibility garments to uniformed staff

- * Lightweight jacket (non-weatherproof) – available as lightweight wear and complies with visibility protection requirements (Stores code reference 876350 for an XL size).

- * Blouson full reflective jacket (waterproof/Goretex). This should not be worn unzipped.

Officers need to undertake risk assessments around identifying circumstances when it is appropriate for them to be highly visible.

PSU Overalls (police officers only)

PSU overalls and other specialist clothing will only be worn when authorised by a supervisor for clear, operational reasons.

Footwear

Uniformed staff

Wear plain black boots or shoes appropriate for the role to be performed. Footwear must be clean, with a low, flat heel.

Socks and tights or stockings must be of a plain colour and appropriate to the uniform being worn.

Non-uniformed staff

Only wear footwear that is clean, smart and appropriate to your role and in keeping with the standards set for uniformed staff. Some styles of shoe are inappropriate in certain situations due to health and safety considerations, eg, high-heeled shoes and open- toe sandals.

All staff

If there is a medical need (eg, disability or pregnancy) for certain types of footwear, this will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Uniform for Specific Events

Court Appearance

As agreed with the local judiciary, Officers and staff attending HM Coroner's Court, High Court, Crown Court or Magistrates Court to give evidence as part of their role should not wear high visibility garments, but should wear normal uniform or plain clothes depending on their role.

The dress code for officers attending as witnesses in court is:

- o White shirt and uniform tie, with name badge
- o Black soft shell fleece to be worn, at the discretion of the officer
- o Tunics may be worn by those in possession of them
- o Utility belt, with holstered straight baton, PAVA and handcuffs, to be worn at the discretion of the officer
- o Officers who wish to wear a tunic in special circumstances (i.e. High Court appearances) but do not have an issue tunic may borrow a tunic from the Stores stock, as per existing tunic loan procedures.
- o In the case of an officer called to give evidence direct from street duties, there may be no opportunity to change uniform. In these circumstances, an explanation will be given to the prosecuting solicitor/barrister for the Judge/Magistrate to be made aware.

Nothing in this recommendation refers to officers patrolling the court precincts, (and so therefore the ACPO/LJ Judge agreement stands) nor prevents deviation from the recommendation for specific, authorised and properly risk-assessed conditions (intelligence/dangerous prisoners etc).

In Magistrates' Court, where the dock is unenclosed, body armour may be worn at the discretion of the officer giving evidence, and taking full account of the risks salient to the case and those involved.

Plain-clothed officers and staff attending court should dress smartly – suit, shirt and tie or female equivalent. Name badges should be worn.

Formal Ceremonial Uniform

Tunics are no longer routinely issued, other than to officers of the rank of Inspector and above, and to other officers whose role requires regular wearing of a tunic.

It is recognised that for such occasions, the wearing of a tunic is more appropriate than blouson etc. For this reason, a limited stock of tunics is available in the Force Stores, in male and female size ranges, and with three lengths in every size. On application, these will be issued and charged to the borrower's authorising department, and duly refunded on return.

The name badge will be worn on the right hand side of the tunic one centimetre above the breast pocket and aligned centrally with the buttonhole.

Any medals are to worn on the left hand side of the tunic in correct order of precedence. Medals may be court-mounted.

Tiepins should not be visible on ceremonial occasions and silver cap covers will not be worn. Female officers may choose between the bowler and the flat cap.

Footwear should be smart, polished. Brogue or other patterned styles are not acceptable

Replacement and Return of Uniforms

All issued uniform remains the property of Northamptonshire Police and is replaced on a condemnation basis, that is, the issue of a new garment may be approved only as the replacement of the unserviceable one. The old garments MUST be returned to Stores for recycling or secure disposal.

Replacement items must be ordered via the MFSS iProcurement self-service function on Oracle.

Requisitioned items will be sent to your station from stores on the weekly delivery. In exceptional circumstances, contact Stores staff in the first instance to make an appointment for a fitting.

Uniform which is heavily contaminated by bodily or other fluids may be replaced by Stores. The contaminated uniform must be surrendered to stores for destruction.

Other less serious contamination of uniform can be treated by washing to the

manufacturer's recommendations, which in most cases will suffice as a decontaminating process.

Footwear which is contaminated in these types of circumstances will normally be replaced at the expense of the Force, via the MFSS iProcurement self-service function on Oracle, or, in exceptional circumstances, by contacting Stores directly.

Clothing seized for an investigation will generally be replaced at the expense of the Force.

At the end of office or employment and on retirement from Northamptonshire Police, it is the individuals responsibility to return all police uniform directly to Stores in person (unless in exceptional circumstances), in order to comply with tax and security requirements. ALL uniform and equipment must be returned before, on or as soon as possible after the final day of employment.

Force Stores will contact all leaving officers and staff prior to their last working day to confirm the process for the return of all uniform and equipment. However, if no contact is received it is the responsibility of the leaver to contact Stores to make these arrangements.

Loss and Damage

Report to your line manager as soon as practicable any damage, loss or destruction of uniform or equipment issued to you. Replacement items are all ordered via the MFSS system – your order must be directed to Stores for approval and must provide the justification for the order being placed. Staff should refrain from wearing high value personal items in order to avoid loss or damage.

Such items will normally be replaced but your duty to care for them may mean that if the damage or loss appears to arise from your negligence, you may be required to pay for the repair or replacement.

Charity Events

Charity events in which Northamptonshire Police participate, where individuals involved wear casual clothes for work, fall outside of this policy.

Approval for participation in such events should be gained from your Area Commander/Departmental Head.

Responsibility for implementation

Managers and supervisors must ensure that instructions relating to dress and appearance are complied with and that a high standard of personal appearance is maintained. They have the full backing of the Chief Officer Group to ensure the

effective enforcement of these standards.

It is expected that any manager or supervisor in Northamptonshire Police will take responsibility for upholding this policy by challenging any member of staff whom they consider to be inappropriately dressed, irrespective of whether they manage that member of staff.

It is also expected that all leaders will set an example through their own professional standards of dress and appearance. Ensure groups of uniformed staff and officers working together in public view are dressed uniformly as far as practicable, subject to operational commitments, religious observance/cultural needs, medical, maternity or health reasons.

Monitoring and review

The senior owner will review the content of this guidance annually to ensure that this is relevant and up to date. The author has agreed that this document will be reviewed within 12 months of the effective date.

Related Documents

Any related policy / procedure links can be found via the policy library.