

MANUAL: Personnel  
Chapter Series CC--Commissioned Corps Personnel Manual  
Part 2--Commissioned Corps Personnel Administration

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
Public Health Service

Chapter CC26--Conditions of Service  
Subchapter CC26.3--Uniforms  
Personnel INSTRUCTION 1--General Information on Uniforms and Appearance

CONTENTS

<u>Section</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Page</u>
A.	Purpose .....	2
B.	Authority .....	2
C.	Explanation of Terms .....	2
D.	Background .....	3
E.	Officers' Appearance .....	4
F.	Guidance to Local Uniform Authorities .....	6
G.	Obtaining Uniforms and Accessories .....	7
H.	Wear of the Uniform by Retired and Inactive Reserve Officers .....	8
I.	Officers Assigned to Other Services .....	8
J.	Wear of Civilian Clothing on Military Installations .....	9
K.	Travel Uniform .....	9
L.	Wear of Uniform Outside the U. S. ....	10
Exhibit I	List of Distinctive Components .....	11
Exhibit II	List of Authorized Uniforms .....	12
Exhibit III	Sample Uniform of the Day Directive .....	13

### Section A. Purpose

The INSTRUCTIONS in this Subchapter prescribe official Public Health Service (PHS) policy governing PHS commissioned officers' uniforms. This INSTRUCTION provides information of a general or miscellaneous nature, while the remaining INSTRUCTIONS deal with certain specific uniform topics.

### Section B. Authority

42 U.S.C. 216(a) authorizes the President to prescribe uniform regulations for the PHS Commissioned Corps. That authority was delegated to the Secretary by Executive Order 11140. The basic Secretarial regulations are contained in INSTRUCTION 1, Subchapter CC46.3, "Uniform Regulations," of this manual. The authority to administer the PHS Commissioned Corps has been delegated by the Assistant Secretary for Health to the Surgeon General as set forth in 53 Federal Register 5046-5047, dated February 19, 1988. The Surgeon General has delegated the authority for daily administration of the PHS Commissioned Corps to the Director, Division of Commissioned Personnel (DCP), Office of the Surgeon General.

18 U.S.C. 702 sets forth criminal penalties for unauthorized possession or wear of the uniform or its distinctive components (see definition in Section C, below).

### Section C. Explanation of Terms

The following descriptions of terms apply unless noted otherwise.

1. Agency. Unless otherwise defined, the term Agency includes the following: (1) Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health, (2) any PHS Agency, (3) any Federal organization outside of PHS having PHS commissioned officers assigned to it, and (4) any of the PHS Regional Offices.
2. Distinctive Component. A part of a uniform which has been designated as being unique to the uniform. Distinctive components may not be worn with civilian attire nor worn by other than active duty commissioned officers except as specifically provided within this manual. The distinctive components of the PHS uniform are listed in Exhibit I.
3. Insignia. Uniform components which serve to (1) identify the uniform as being that of a particular uniformed service; or (2) identify the grade, rank or other classification of the wearer.
4. Local Uniform Authority (LUA). The official having authority to prescribe the uniforms which may be worn within a given area. This official also determines those matters of uniform policy which are discretionary as set forth in this Subchapter. For the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, the LUA is the Surgeon General. For all other locations, each PHS Agency or other Agency having PHS commissioned officers shall appoint LUAs.

5. Optional Item. An item which may be worn or used at the discretion of the individual officer unless the LUA has specifically prohibited its wear.
6. Organizational Clothing. Clothing and related equipment which is provided by the Agency for use by individual officers as necessary. Organizational clothing is returned to the Agency when an officer leaves the applicable assignment.
7. Prescribable Item. An item whose wear or usage can be required by the LUA. Unless required, such an item is considered optional, and may be worn at the discretion of the individual unless prohibited by the LUA.
8. Required Item. An item of the uniform which is required as part of the basic collection of items for that uniform. An officer wearing a particular uniform will maintain all the required components.
9. Uniform of the Day. The uniform chosen by the LUA as the uniform for general performance of duties at a given location. In addition to the uniform of the day, the LUA may prescribe one or more additional uniforms for particular purposes. Officers not authorized to wear one of the additional uniforms may only wear the uniform of the day. The list of authorized uniforms contained in Exhibit II indicates which uniforms may be chosen as uniform of the day.
10. Working Uniform. A uniform which may be prescribed when working conditions are such that the use of other uniforms would be impractical. Working uniforms are not worn for general usage and are not appropriate for wear in public away from the duty location. Working uniforms are listed in Exhibit II.

#### Section D. Background

1. Purpose of the Uniform. The uniform, with its various insignia and devices, is designed primarily to identify on sight commissioned officers of PHS. It also indicates at a glance the wearer's grade. It serves as a visual indication of the authority and responsibility imposed by law on a commissioned officer.
2. Only Authorized Uniforms to be Worn. All officers in uniform shall wear only the uniform appropriate to their grade; shall wear only regulation uniform items; and shall wear no badges, ribbons or other accoutrements not specifically authorized in accordance with this subchapter.
3. Responsibilities Toward the Uniform. All officials of PHS and other agencies to which officers are assigned having responsibility for the supervision of commissioned officers shall assure that officers under their direction wear the uniform properly and adhere to the grooming standards contained herein. Officers who wear the uniform improperly or who exhibit a careless attitude toward their personal appearance bring discredit to themselves and to the Service and subject themselves to disciplinary action. Therefore, individual

officers and officials should exert their personal influence, where necessary, as a means of encouraging fellow officers to wear the uniform properly.

#### Section E. Officers' Appearance

1. Smartness and Image. Uniforms and associated equipment shall be made of high quality materials and to a high standard of workmanship. Clothing items shall be of reasonable fit. Uniforms shall be kept scrupulously clean and all lace, devices, and insignia shall be bright and free from tarnish. Hats and caps shall be worn squarely on the head with the bottom edge horizontal. Shoes shall be shined and in good repair.
2. Miscellaneous Articles. Articles such as pencils, pens, watch chains, pins, jewelry, handkerchiefs, combs, cigarette or cigar packs, pipes, etc., shall not protrude from nor be visible upon the uniform. Necklaces, crosses, pendants, etc., shall not be visible when in uniform. One wrist watch, one wrist bracelet, and finger rings are permitted, but must not be of faddish or outlandish design (one ring per hand in addition to a wedding ring is authorized). Hair ribbons are not authorized, but inconspicuous pins or fastening devices for women's hair are permitted. Ankle bracelets are not authorized. Tie clasps and tacks, shirt studs, cuff links and earrings shall be worn as prescribed in this Subchapter. Earrings are not authorized for men.
3. Eye glasses. Prescription eyeglasses must not be of eccentric or faddish design. Sunglasses and light-reactive glasses of conservative design are permitted, but excessively dark lenses are not permitted indoors. Highly reflective "aviator" lenses are authorized only for officers engaged in flight activities or who need such lenses because of unusual work conditions.
4. Men's Grooming.
  - a. General. Hair shall be neat and clean and present a groomed appearance. Hair above the ears and around the neck shall be tapered from the lower hairline upwards and outwards so as to blend smoothly with the hair style. (Tapering refers to a cut which results in the hair being very short and thinned at the lower edge and getting gradually longer and fuller as it proceeds from the lower hairline upwards onto the sides or back of the head.) Tapering is not required for haircuts which are extremely short. The objective is to avoid a cut in which the full bulk of the hair ends abruptly at the lower hairline.

Hair on the back of the neck may not touch the collar. Individual hair shall be no longer than four inches; however, hair which lies close to the head may be longer than four inches, if necessary, in order to cover thin or bald areas. Hair shall be groomed so that it does not touch the ears

or the collar, nor extend below the eyebrows when headgear is removed. The bulk of the hair shall not exceed two inches. (Bulk is the distance that the mass of the hair protrudes from the scalp.)

The above are maximum dimensions; the particular hair style worn by an individual should incorporate a length and bulk, within these maximums, which give a neatly groomed appearance. In no instance shall the hair interfere with the proper wearing of uniform headgear.

- b. Styles. Various hair styles, including the Afro, are permitted as long as these styles meet the criteria for maximum length and bulk and maintain the tapered appearance on the neck and sides. Hair may not be plaited or braided while in uniform.
- c. Sideburns. If sideburns are worn, they shall be neatly trimmed and tapered in the same manner as the haircut. They shall not extend below the earlobe and must be of even width (i.e., not flared). Sideburns shall end in a clean-cut horizontal line.
- d. Facial Hair. If a beard and/or mustache is worn, it shall be neatly trimmed and groomed at all times, so as to avoid a ragged appearance. A beard may be either full or partial; however, patches or spots of facial hair are not considered a beard and are not authorized. The bulk of a beard (the distance that the mass of the facial hair protrudes from the skin) shall not exceed one-half inch, and the length of individual facial hair shall not exceed one inch.

When a mustache is worn with a beard it shall blend smoothly into the beard. When worn without a beard, the mustache's ends shall not extend downward beyond the corners of the mouth nor outward more than one-quarter inch beyond the corners of the mouth. No portion of a mustache may extend below the lipline of the upper lip.

The LUA may restrict the wearing of facial hair by certain persons when sanitation and safety considerations weigh against the wearing of such hair.

- e. Hairpieces. Wigs or hairpieces may be worn by active-duty personnel while in uniform only for cosmetic reasons to cover baldness or physical disfiguration. Wigs may be worn by inactive reserve personnel while serving on short tours of active duty. When a wig or hairpiece is worn, it shall be of good quality and fit and its appearance shall conform to the specifications contained herein.

##### 5. Women's Grooming.

- a. General. The hair shall be neatly arranged and shaped to present a conservative appearance. Hair on the back of the neck may touch but may not fall below the collar. No hair shall show under the front brim of the hat. Afro, natural, bouffant and similar hair styles are permitted; but

exaggerated styles and styles with excessive fullness or extreme height are not authorized. In no instance shall the hair interfere with proper wearing of the uniform headgear. Pony tails and plaited hair are not permitted while in uniform. Hair may be braided provided that the braids are held close to the head and do not interfere with the correct fit of the headgear. Hair coloring must have a natural appearance, be of a color which would occur normally (e.g., orange hair would be prohibited), and be applied in a fashion so as to complement the individual.

- b. Hairpieces. When a wig or hairpiece is worn, it shall be of good quality and fit and its appearance shall conform to the specifications contained herein.
- c. Cosmetics. Cosmetics shall be conservative and in good taste. The colors selected for cosmetics should blend with the natural skin color and enhance natural features. Exaggerated use of cosmetics and faddish styles are prohibited.
- d. Fingernails. Nails may not extend more than one-quarter inch beyond the fingertips. If used, nail polish must be of a shade that complements the skin color.

#### Section F. Guidance to Local Uniform Authorities

##### 1. Designation of LUAs.

- a. Each PHS Agency shall designate one or more LUAs to exercise the uniform prescribing authority within particular portions of the Agency's area of responsibility. The Agency operates within the limitations of PHS rules involving uniforms, and the LUA operates within the limitations of the Agency rules on uniforms.
- b. Each Agency shall provide a list of designated LUA's and their associated geographic areas of responsibility to the Director, Division of Commissioned Personnel (DCP), Office of the Surgeon General. The list should include a phone number that can be called for information regarding uniform directives in the area(s). DCP shall be notified when changes are made to the list.
- c. Care must be taken to insure that no officer comes under the authority of more than one LUA within the same Agency. Uniform authority is to be exercised on a geographic basis. A LUA determines policy for all Agency officers within the assigned area. If a LUA's area includes multiple towns, installations, etc., the LUA may prescribe different requirements for the various areas involved. In the case of multiple agencies in the same geographic area, it is strongly advised that the LUAs concerned cooperate and issue a single uniform directive to all officers in the area. Alternatively, the agencies may agree to have one of the LUAs act for all agencies in the area.

## 2. Selection of Uniforms.

- a. Refer to Exhibit II while reading this paragraph. Generally, one uniform of the day should be chosen for each duty station location. The uniform of the day must be selected from among the "General Purpose Service Uniforms" in the Exhibit. This will be the uniform used for general office work and travel within the local area. Service Dress Blue (SDB) is always acceptable in a normal office setting. Additional uniforms may be selected from the "Working Uniforms" in the list and prescribed for officers in working environments that make the Service uniform unsuitable. The LUA determines when a shift is made between the summer and winter uniforms, if a shift is appropriate for the area involved. The Formal, Dinner Dress, and Ceremonial uniforms are used on an occasional basis and the LUA may designate functions at which these uniforms are prescribed.
- b. A LUA may not prohibit the wearing of the SDB in normal office settings but may prohibit optional items of that uniform.
- c. When selecting uniforms and determining policy in regard to prescribable and optional items, the LUA should consider climate, working conditions, and appropriateness of appearance. The LUA will select a uniform of the day and as many additional working uniforms as are needed, but will not authorize more uniforms than necessary. The objective is to have the fewest number of uniforms within a given area that will satisfy requirements, bearing in mind that each officer must own and maintain all required components of the SDB.
- d. Consideration should be given to the personal expense of making frequent changes in the uniform directive and to the desires of the officers concerned. However, individual officers' preferences and costs shall not be the primary determining factors in selecting uniforms.

3. Designation of Covered Areas. LUAs may determine those areas, such as a complex of several buildings and grounds including parking areas, that officers may transit out-of-doors but consider themselves indoors for purposes of meeting uniform requirements and/or extending Service courtesy such as saluting.

### Section G. Obtaining Uniforms and Accessories

1. The various PHS uniforms are comprised of the same articles of clothing as the corresponding uniforms of the U.S. Navy (with the exception of some optional items and special-purpose uniforms). Therefore, any clothing article which is certified to meet the specifications for naval officer personnel is suitable for wear with the appropriate PHS uniforms. PHS uniforms are made distinctive by the wearing of unique PHS insignia. These include the corps device, cap chin strap, cap device, shoulder boards, and buttons. The insignia are described in INSTRUCTION 6 of this Subchapter.

2. Many Navy Exchange retail stores have a uniform shop. The basic articles of uniform clothing are usually available in these shops. However, the unique PHS insignia and buttons are not stocked in Navy Uniform Shops except in the Washington, D.C. area. Insignia, as well as complete uniforms, may be ordered by mail from the Uniform Support Center, P.O. Box 15065, Norfolk, VA. 23521-0065. A Navy Uniform Shop should have order forms in stock, or an officer may order directly from the Uniform Support Center.
3. In towns or cities having substantial Navy populations, private clothiers will often carry uniforms, but will probably not stock PHS insignia. They may be able to order these insignia. There are also a number of commercial mail order uniform firms from which uniforms can be obtained.
4. When purchasing uniform clothing items, be sure each article has a label certifying that the item meets Navy requirements.

#### Section H. Wear of the Uniform by Retired and Inactive Reserve Officers

1. Retired officers and reserve corps officers not on active duty may wear the prescribed uniform of the rank held on the retired or inactive list on occasions of ceremony and at gatherings of organizations consisting primarily of Uniformed Services members and former members (see restrictions on wearing the uniform outside the United States in Section L, below). Wearing of the uniform for other purposes is prohibited.
2. The uniform worn by retired and inactive reserve officers shall conform to current regulations, except that retired officers may wear the uniform in accordance with regulations in effect at the time of their retirement if they so desire. If a retired officer is recalled to active duty, the current regulations shall apply.

#### Section I. Officers Assigned to Other Services

1. Officers Assigned to the U. S. Coast Guard. Officers assigned to the U. S. Coast Guard (CG) for extended active duty (i.e., duty other than temporary duty) shall wear the uniform prescribed for wear by CG officers as required by CG directives and regulations; the insignia and distinctive markings of the CG uniforms thus worn shall be as follows:
  - a. PHS shoulder boards
  - b. PHS cap device
  - c. PHS sleeve insignia
  - d. The letters "U. S. Public Health Service" printed under the name on the name tag
  - e. Coast Guard chin strap
  - f. Coast Guard buttons on the uniform jacket and cap

Inactive reserve officers who participate in CG activities by invitation from the CG and with the permission of the PHS, may wear the CG uniform as described above when so participating.

2. Officers Assigned to Other than the CG. Officers assigned to a Uniformed Service other than CG for extended active duty (i.e., duty other than temporary duty) shall, if required under the provisions of the assignment agreement, wear the uniform of that Service which is appropriate to the officer's grade. In this instance, the uniform shall be worn as prescribed in the regulations of the Service concerned. If the assignment agreement does not specifically provide that the officer is not to wear the PHS uniform or the uniform of the Service to which the officer is assigned, the PHS officer shall wear the PHS uniform during the assignment, choosing the PHS uniform which corresponds or most closely corresponds to the type of uniform prescribed for wear by officers of that Service in similar assignments.

#### Section J. Wear of Civilian Clothing on Military Installations

When visiting military installations (including facilities of the U. S. Coast Guard and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), whether on official business or on personal business (e.g., shopping at the commissary, sightseeing, etc.) officers out of uniform shall wear neat, tasteful clothing appropriate to the business. Except when participating in sporting or exercise activities, gym shorts, exercise suits, tank tops and similar clothing are generally inappropriate for officers on military installations.

#### Section K. Travel Uniform

1. Travel by Non-Military Conveyances. For official travel within the United States, an officer may wear the uniform prescribed in Paragraph 3, below, or appropriate civilian attire. For official travel outside the United States, appropriate civilian attire will normally be worn (see Section L, below).
2. Travel by Military Conveyance. For official or unofficial travel in military-owned or military-controlled conveyances, the uniform prescribed in Paragraph 3, below, must be worn. However, if military officials advise that (1) entry requirements into a foreign area of destination prohibit the wear of the uniform or (2) that the traveller/officer will be passing through high-risk areas with respect to terrorist activities or social or political unrest, the uniform shall not be worn and the type of dress recommended by authorities shall be worn. See also Section L, below.
3. Prescribed Uniforms.
  - a. Official Travel. Service Dress Blue or as specified in orders (see Paragraph E.5, INSTRUCTION 4, Subchapter CC24.1, "Space-Required Travel on Military Aircraft").

b. Unofficial Travel.

- (1) Service Dress Blue, or
- (2) PHS uniform of the day for the area of destination, if a determination has been made for the area concerned; if such a determination has not been made t h e following may be worn:

April 15 - October 15: Summer White or Summer Khaki  
October 15 - April 15: Service Dress Blue Sweater or Winter Blue

Section L. Wear of Uniform Outside the U. S.

In accordance with international agreements on the status of forces, PHS officers are generally not permitted to wear the uniform outside the United States unless assigned to another Uniformed Service whose regulations permit wearing the uniform. However, the Director, DCP, may authorize officers to wear the PHS uniform outside the United States under certain circumstances. Authorization must be obtained in advance by writing to:

Director  
Division of Commissioned Personnel, OSG  
Room 4-35 Parklawn Building  
Rockville, MD 20857-0001

The request for authorization should include: (1) the identification of the officer(s) involved, (2) the nature of the assignment, (3) the places and dates the uniform is to be worn, and (4) the reasons why wearing the uniform would be helpful in the performance of duties or otherwise appropriate.

## EXHIBIT I

## List of Distinctive Components

1. Cap Device (full size and miniature)
2. PHS Buttons (metal buttons which are embossed with a replica of the PHS corps device)
3. PHS Corps Device (all sizes)
4. PHS Name Tag
5. Shoulder Boards

## EXHIBIT II

## List of Authorized Uniforms

MenWomen

## Formal and Dinner Dress Uniforms

Formal Dress  
 Dinner Dress Blue Jacket  
 Dinner Dress White Jacket  
 Dinner Dress Blue  
 Dinner Dress White  
 Tropical Dinner Dress Blue

Formal Dress  
 Dinner Dress Blue Jacket  
 Dinner Dress White Jacket  
 Dinner Dress Blue  
 Dinner Dress White  
 Tropical Dinner Dress Blue

## Ceremonial Uniforms

Full Dress Blue  
 Full Dress White

Full Dress Blue  
 Full Dress White

General Purpose Service Uniforms<sup>1/</sup>

Service Dress Blue  
 Service Dress Blue Sweater  
 Service Dress White  
 Summer Blue (Salt & Pepper)  
 Winter Blue  
 Summer White  
 Summer Khaki

Service Dress Blue  
 Service Dress Blue Sweater  
 Service Dress White  
 Summer Blue (Salt & Pepper)  
 Winter Blue  
 Summer White  
 Summer Khaki

Working Uniforms<sup>2/</sup>

Working Khaki  
 Winter Working Blue  
 Indoor Duty White

Working Khaki  
 Winter Working Blue  
 Indoor Duty White  
 Indoor Duty White Dress  
 Indoor Duty White Pantsuit

## Special Purpose Uniforms

See INSTRUCTION 7 of this Subchapter, "Special Uniform Situations"

## NOTES:

- 1/ LUAs select the uniform of the day from among these service uniforms.  
2/ LUAs may prescribe or authorize working uniforms in this category for officers whose duties or conditions would cause the uniform of the day to be impracticable. These uniforms are not authorized for general wear away from the duty location (e.g., in stores, restaurants, etc.), but may be worn while commuting between lodgings and duty location.

## EXHIBIT III

## Sample Uniform of the Day Directive

NOTE: This is an example only. Each LUA will prescribe such uniform of the day, working uniforms and optional items as are appropriate to the area and duties involved. The directive must set forth the area of coverage. The method of distributing the directive shall be selected by the LUA, but the directive will apply to all officers under the LUA's purview within the specified geographic area. A LUA may issue different directives for different portions of his/her area of responsibility.

FROM: Local Uniform Authority for Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Area

SUBJECT: Uniform of the Day - Fall and Winter, 19XX

TO: Active-Duty Commissioned Officers,  
Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Area

This memorandum prescribes the uniforms of the day for Public Health Service (PHS) commissioned officers assigned to duty stations in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area, which includes the cities of Alexandria and Rockville, and the counties of Montgomery, Frederick, Prince Georges, Arlington, and Fairfax.

APPLICABILITY:

The provisions of this memorandum apply to all officers in the prescribed area who wear the PHS uniform, whether by direction or as a matter of personal choice. However, it does not apply to those PHS officers appointed under the Junior Commissioned Officer Student Training and Extern Program who are assigned to duty stations in this metropolitan area. Moreover, officers assigned to duty stations in this area with the United States Coast Guard, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and medical students attending the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences have separate uniform authorities. Therefore, these officers must follow the separate directive issued by their respective uniform authority.

UNIFORM OF THE DAY:

1. October 1 through October 31 is the transition period from summer to winter uniform of the day. During this period, the uniforms of the day are the Service Dress Blue (SDB), Service Dress Blue Sweater (SDBS), Summer White, or Summer Blue ("Salt and Pepper"), and officers may choose within this range of service uniforms.
2. Effective November 1, the uniforms of the day are the SDB and SDBS. Except as provided in paragraph (3), female officers may wear the version of the uniform of the day with skirt or the version with slacks.

3. For the purpose of uniformity, Agency Heads may prescribe that officers under their jurisdiction wear the SDB uniform for ceremonial occasions, or for other appropriate circumstances on a specific day and for a specific reason. For these occasions, they may also determine if female officers must wear the skirt in lieu of the optional slacks. However, Agency Heads are not authorized to issue general or blanket directives concerning other uniforms.
4. Circumstances in Which Other Uniforms and Components are Permitted:
  - a. Indoor Duty White. The Indoor Duty White (IDW), which is the same as Summer White uniform but without ribbons, may be worn by officers assigned to duties in clinical or laboratory settings. However, the IDW is a working uniform and is not appropriate for wear when circumstances, such as meetings scheduled in advance with official visitors or members of the general public, indicate that a service uniform should be worn. Officers may wear the IDW while travelling directly between their residence and their duty station.
  - b. Formal and Dinner Dress Uniforms. The Formal Dress uniform may be worn at the appropriate formal evening functions (white tie); the Dinner Dress uniform may be worn at the appropriate dinner and social functions (black tie). All such uniforms must conform to the winter season, effective November 1, with flexibility between October 1 and October 30, for transitional purposes.
  - c. Domestic Travel. An officer engaged in domestic travel may wear the service uniform of the day prescribed for the area to which the officer is proceeding.

In summary: PHS officers assigned to duty stations in this area, except as noted above, are not authorized to wear uniforms other than the Service Dress Blue or Service Dress Blue Sweater in routine office settings. However, during the transition period, officers may wear the Summer White and Summer Blue uniforms. Officers assigned to clinical or laboratory settings meeting the criteria of paragraph 4.a., may also wear the IDW uniform.

\_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_  
Surgeon General