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OFFICER  
ADVISORY  
GROUP

## JO VOICE

### *“Uniforms” June 2019*

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*The information below was provided by CDR Kyle Lyons, Senior Adverse/Disciplinary Actions Officer & Uniform Coordinator in the Office of the Surgeon General (Office of Commissioned Corps Headquarters (CCHQ), Immediate Office of the Director) and LCDR Courtney Drevo and LT Maria Agresta-Workman, Junior Officer Advisory Group (JOAG) Communications and Publications Committee, Uniform Subcommittee Co-Leads. This information is designed to serve as an unofficial guide. Please refer to USPHS websites and policies for changes or updates to any of the below information.*

### **Questions/Responses**

1. (A) For formal events the dress code states that, “Officers with the rank of Lieutenant Commander and below may wear Dinner Dress Blue or Dinner Dress White (Service Dress Blue/White with black bow tie and miniature medals, no name tag).” As a newly commissioned officer, my only ribbons are the Regular Corps ribbon, the Commissioned Corps Training ribbon, and the Commissioned Officers Association (COA) ribbon (for COA functions). Please advise which PHS and other ribbons have medals associated with them and where medals can be purchased.

All PHS individual honor and service ribbons have an associated full or miniature medal set. Unit awards, training ribbons, and the Regular Corps Ribbon do not have medal sets. Awards earned in other uniformed services may or may not have a medal set, please check with the issuing uniformed service for specific award details. Medals may be purchased from the Navy Exchange online.

(B) On which uniforms can medals be worn?

Full size medals may be worn on Full Service Dress Blue or White uniforms. Miniature medals may be worn on the Dinner Dress Blue or White Jacket or Dinner Dress Blue or

White uniforms. Medals are not worn with service uniforms (e.g., Service Khakis or Summer Whites).

(C) Please provide guidance on what constitutes the modified Service Dress Blue uniform (e.g., is wearing the sweater or windbreaker appropriate)?

There is no such thing as the “modified Service Dress Blue uniform.” The Service Dress Blue uniform may be worn without the coat, by either wearing an authorized sweater, cardigan or the black windbreaker jacket. In the immediate office space, the coat, sweater, cardigan or black windbreaker jacket may be removed. If you are moving away from your office space (e.g., going to the restroom, dining hall, another floor, outside) you are required to wear either the coat, sweater, cardigan or black windbreaker jacket. Note: The cardigan sweater shall not be worn outdoors. Also, the black garrison cap will not be worn with the Service Dress Blue coat.

(D) When is it authorized to wear pearl and diamond earrings while in uniform?

Women may wear yellow gold ball earrings with all uniforms. White pearl or diamond earrings may only be worn with Dinner Dress or Service Dress uniforms. Only one earring may be worn per ear, centered on the ear lobe. The size shall be 4mm-6mm (approximately 1/8 - 1/4 inch), white pearl, clear (non-colored) diamond or yellow gold ball, plain with shiny or brushed matte finish, screw-on or post type.

(E) What PHS uniforms and/or components are being phased out and when?

The female white or khaki combination cover will phase out on 1 January 2020. The replacement for the white or khaki combination cover is known as the alternative combination white or khaki cover. The alternative combination cover may be worn now as an optional wear item, but is required effective 1 January 2020.

2. (A) At which outside Corps events/occasions (e.g., weddings, graduations, funerals) may an officer wear dress uniforms?

Uniform wear for weddings and funerals is addressed in Commissioned Corps Instruction CC413.01 ([https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/ccis/documents/CC413\\_01.pdf](https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/ccis/documents/CC413_01.pdf)). Please see below for text straight from the policy.

### **Weddings**

- a. Immediate Participants and Family. Corps officers, including retired and ready reserve officers, may elect to wear either customary civilian attire or the corresponding uniform of their Uniformed Service when participating in a wedding ceremony as a bride, groom, maid of honor, bridesmaid, best man, usher, or other member of the wedding party. All members of the wedding party, including those who are members of other Services, should wear the same type of uniform. Civilian members of the wedding party may not, wear the Corps uniform.

- b. The Service Dress Blue or White is the counterpart to business attire; Dinner Dress is the counterpart to a tuxedo or a gown; Full Dress provides a more ceremonial atmosphere, but is not as formal as Dinner Dress. The selection of uniforms is a matter of discretion, taking into account prevailing customs and the desires of the couple to be married.
- c. Ushers and Bridesmaids. All ushers or bridesmaids who are Service members should wear the same uniform. When multiple Uniformed Services are involved, uniforms of corresponding type should be worn. For example, Service Dress and Dinner Dress uniforms should not be mixed.
- d. Guests. Uniformed guests wear the appropriate Service Dress uniform.
- e. Swords. Swords may be carried with the Full Dress or Dinner Dress uniforms. Swords are not worn in a house of worship. If the wedding takes place in a non-religious setting, carrying of swords shall be at the discretion of the bride and groom. In a house of worship, the sword belt without scabbard may be carried with the end clips fastened together. If an arch of swords is to be formed, draw swords outside of the house of worship. Uniformed guests would not normally carry swords.

### **Funerals**

- a. General. The Service Dress uniform for the time of year is the appropriate uniform for attendance at a funeral (e.g., summer funeral Service Dress White (SDW) uniform, winter funeral Service Dress Blue (SDB)). In lieu of SDW, the Summer White uniform would be an acceptable alternative. When participating in a military funeral, officers should wear the Corps' uniform equivalent to that worn by the participating members of the decedent's service. At military funerals, officers serving as pallbearers or attending in an official capacity may wear a mourning badge, if designated. When attending in a non-official capacity or for civilian funerals, the mourning badge is worn at personal discretion. For the purposes of this Section, the funeral of a Corps officer may be designated a "military funeral" if desired by the next-of-kin or requested in the officer's will.
- b. Mourning Badge. A mourning badge is a length of black crepe, 3 inches wide and long enough to encircle the arm. It is worn on the left sleeve of the outer garment, halfway between the shoulder and the elbow. When a sword is worn with the Full Dress uniform, a mourning badge which is 3 inches wide and 20 inches long is knotted in the middle at the sword hilt.
- c. White Gloves. Officers may be required to wear white gloves at military funerals. White gloves are optional at other funerals, and are worn only during the funeral ceremony. Gloves are not authorized with the Summer White uniform.

(B) Is permission needed to wear the uniform at an outside Corps event/occasion? If so, what is the process to gain permission?

The uniform policy covers the wear of uniform in certain situations. If it is appropriate for other uniformed services to wear the uniform, then the corresponding PHS uniform

may be worn. For example, if attending a graduation ceremony where the uniformed services are expected to be in business attire, the Service Dress Blue is appropriate. If in doubt, please reach out to your Liaison for further clearance or guidance. Note: For international travel, in accordance with international agreements, PHS officers are generally not permitted to wear the uniform outside the United States unless the Surgeon General gives authorization or the officer is assigned to another uniformed service whose regulations permits wearing the uniform.

3. Where can officers locate and purchase the most recent required and optional outerwear components prescribed for the Operational Dress Uniform (ODU)?

The ODU itself, as well as many accoutrements, may be purchased from the U.S. Coast Guard Exchange <https://shopcgx.com/uniforms/>. Accoutrements for the ODU may also be purchased from the Navy Exchange online or from the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center Uniform Shop.

4. Are officers permitted to wear the woven khaki belt?

Yes, a plain cloth or webbing belt of the same color and material as the uniform, 1¼ inch wide for men, 1 inch wide for women, and fitted with a gold anodized clip.

5. Many officers are stationed at or deployed to very warm or austere environments for outside field work. Are there any considerations to the wearing of uniforms in this type of climate? For example, ODUs do not seem appropriate in the hot sun when doing field work.

Whether singly or in a group, working indoors or outdoors, officers should seek permission from the highest ranking military officer or civilian supervisor to doff the ODU blouse. Officers may doff the ODU blouse when working outdoors or in hot climates, as long as there is authorization and there are no safety issues in doing so. All officers, with limited exceptions, are required to wear a Corps uniform while in the performance of their duties. At this time, there are no alternative working uniforms to the ODU other than the coveralls and/or flight suit. The coveralls and flight suit are restricted wear items based on location, duty station and work performed.

6. Are females required to wear a white T-shirt underneath the PHS Khaki uniforms?

No.

7. Please advise if and when the following female Navy uniform changes will affect female PHS officers:

- Combination cover  
Already authorized, mandatory 1 January 2020.

- Choker-style dress white coat  
Not currently authorized in the Corps, under review.
- New fit/cut on skirts and pants  
As the new styles come into wide use in the Navy and ultimately replace the current style/fit, the Corps is already prepared to amend the current policies to reflect the change.
- Grooming standards to allow ponytails.  
At present, there are no plans to amend the grooming and appearance standards to allow ponytails in the Corps. This is not universal across all seven uniformed services.

8. (A) Are combat boots made with synthetic/faux leather authorized for wear with the ODU?

No, boots may be made of leather, leather and fabric (only black fabric is authorized, commonly called “jungle boots”) or black brushless suede.

(B) Please address the appearance of logos on boots as many of the boots available feature embossed or sewn-on logos on parts of the boot that are visible with bloused trousers. Are these authorized for wear?

Possibly. If the logo is small, discrete and does not garner undue attention, it may be authorized.

9. Please post some photos of:

(A) Close up photos of appropriate wear of ribbons & badges with different services (e.g., U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) vs Bureau of Prisons (BOP) vs National Institutes of Health (NIH)).

Currently, there are no close up photos of ribbons to provide for the different assignments (USCG, NIH, BOP, etc.) to share; but the ribbon rack would look the same for each of the locations because decorations and insignias are established and awarded in accordance with Commissioned Corps Instruction CC1511.01 ([https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/ccis/documents/CC511\\_01.pdf](https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/ccis/documents/CC511_01.pdf)). Medals and ribbons are arranged in accordance with precedence established in Commissioned Corps Instruction CC512.01 (<https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/ccis/documents/CC512.01.pdf>). A chart of established medals, insignias and ribbons can be viewed at: [https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/PDF\\_docs/Awards%20Poster%20May%202015.pdf](https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/PDF_docs/Awards%20Poster%20May%202015.pdf). Please read guidance and policy on CCMIS and/or contact CDR Lyons ([james.lyons@hhs.gov](mailto:james.lyons@hhs.gov)) if clarification or more specific guidance is needed.

(B) Different ball caps when in ODUs (e.g., Coast Guard vs BOP vs NIH)

There are only two (2) authorized covers for the ODU. The required command ball cap and the prescribed 8-point cover. PHS officers, regardless of duty station, are only authorized to wear one of these two authorized covers when wearing the ODU.

(C) Wear of dinner vs mess dress

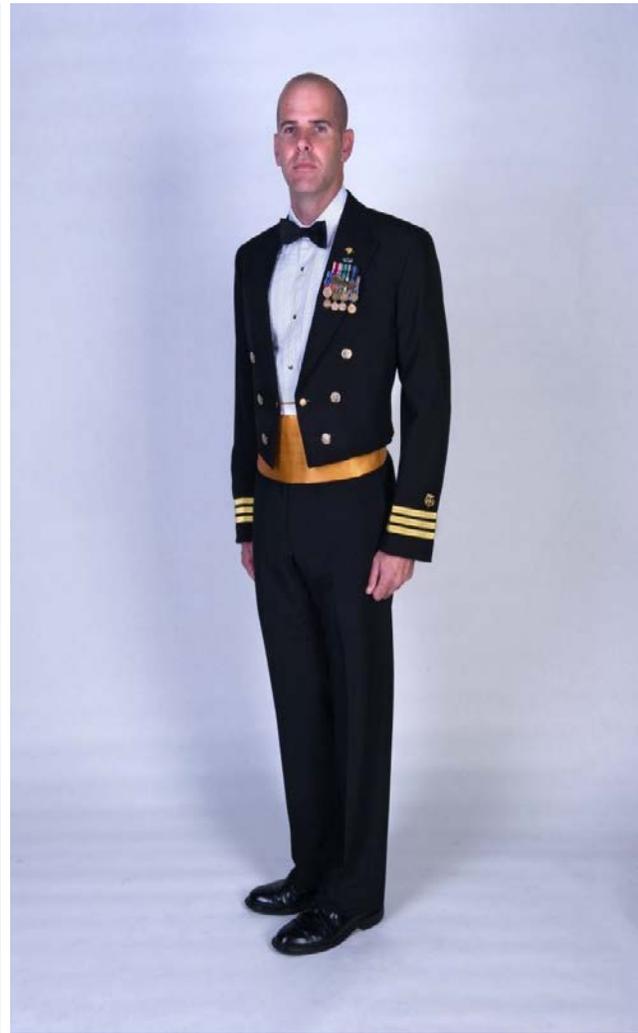
Dinner Dress uniforms:





Mess Dress uniforms:





10. Can you provide the location(s) where officers can order the various uniform components (e.g., name tapes, USPHS collar devices, outerwear)?

All uniform components, with the exception of the ODU and the Army Cardigan Sweater, may be obtained from the Navy Exchange online or at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center uniform shop. The PHS/NOAA version of the ODU is only sold by the Coast Guard Exchange (<https://shopcgx.com/uniforms/>) and the Army Cardigan is sold at AAFES uniform shops and online at: [https://www.shopmyexchange.com/browse/military/army-uniforms/\\_/N-104825](https://www.shopmyexchange.com/browse/military/army-uniforms/_/N-104825).

11. How can Officers provide input into the decision-making process for the selection of USPHS uniforms? Specifically, the utility of our current ODUs is not as good as previous Battle Dress Uniforms (BDUs) in terms of pockets and storage space.

Considerations for new uniforms, components etc., may be sent directly to CDR Lyons ([james.lyons@hhs.gov](mailto:james.lyons@hhs.gov)). Realizing, the Corps does not have the budget to create a new uniform, stock, sell or resupply it.