

# Metropolitan Police Academy



## 1.1 Uniform and Appearance

*January 30, 2024*

## Introduction

A professional image must be maintained at all times. Recruits and other sworn officers (collectively “sworn members” or “officers”) are held strictly accountable to all regulations governing personal appearance. Sworn members must always present a neat and tidy appearance while on duty, whether in uniform or civilian attire. No on duty (to include court, overtime, or other duty assignment) member shall wear any article of clothing visible to the public containing social, economic, or political language that might be considered an advocacy statement or create controversy. The Uniform and Appearance Standards are fully outlined in GO-PER-110.11 (Uniform, Equipment, and Appearance Standards).

### 1.1.1 Adhere to the Academy cell phone and business card policy for recruits

#### Cell Phones

No cell phones or other electronic devices are allowed to be carried by a Recruit officer while on duty except in the following circumstances:

- Only the class leader and assistant class leader may be authorized to carry a cell phone during specialized training. The class leader and assistant class leader’s cell phones shall be kept in vibrate/silent mode, concealed, and not used for personal business.
- In cases of emergency and with the permission of their class officer or class sergeant, a Recruit officer may use the telephone at the customer service desk.
- In certain extraordinary circumstances, a cell phone exception for a Recruit officer may be granted. The Director of Initial Training must preapprove all exceptions.
- On details or special assignments, no Recruit officer shall carry a cell phone unless authorized by the Director of Initial Training.

#### Business Cards

- Sworn members shall carry a sufficient number of business cards and shall provide one when requested.
- When sworn members run out of cards, they must request more and carry sufficient fillable cards until replacement cards arrive. Sworn members can purchase their business cards but must adhere to the special requirements found in GO-PER-110.11 (Uniform, Equipment, and Appearance Standards).

### 1.1.2 Appreciate the policy on cleanliness and personal grooming

#### Hair

- The complete list of standards can be found in GO-PER-110.11 (Uniform, Equipment, and Appearance Standards).
- Sworn members must keep their hair clean, neat, and styled to permit the uniform hat to fit securely on the head.
- Hair must be arranged so that it does not extend below the mid-point of the shirt collar and it permits headgear to fit securely on the head.
- Wigs or hairpieces may be worn if they conform to the appearance standards for natural hair and must blend in with the natural hair color.
- Cornrows, braids, or dreadlocks may be worn if they do not interfere with the proper wearing of the uniform hat or other required headgear, conform to the above length requirements, are neat in appearance, and blend with the natural hair color.
- Items used to hold hair in place, such as hair bands or clips, may not be decorative, must be concealed as much as possible, and must be of a color that blends with the natural hair color.
- Sworn members who choose to wear sideburns shall ensure that they are neatly trimmed, do not extend more than three-quarters (3/4) of an inch beyond the lower edge of the ear, end with a clean-shaven horizontal line, and, if flared, are no wider than one and one half (1 1/2) inches at the bottom.

#### Facial Hair

- For Recruit officers, beards must be well-trimmed and shall not exceed one-quarter (1/4) of an inch in length. The decision to wear a beard shall not be used to excuse sporadic shaving.
- Mustaches and goatees are permitted if they are well-trimmed. A well-trimmed mustache shall not extend more than one-quarter (1/4) of an inch below or beyond the line of the individual's upper lip. Handlebar mustaches are prohibited. Goatees shall not exceed one-quarter (1/4) of an inch in length.

### **Fingernails**

- Fingernails must be kept clean and neatly trimmed.
- Fingernails may not extend more than one-quarter (1/4) of an inch beyond the tip of the finger.
- If nail polish is worn, it may only be a light color, skin color, or clear.
- No objects may be affixed to the fingernail.

### **Make-up**

- If make-up is worn, it must be subdued and natural looking.

### **Eyewear Standards**

- Prescription eyeglasses that have a conservative design and color may be worn. No eyeglasses that are garish in color or have lenses or frames with initials or other adornments on them shall be worn.
- Sunglasses may be green, gray, brown, or another neutral tint in color and, similarly, shall have undecorated frames. Mirrored and opaque sunglasses are prohibited while on duty. Sunglasses shall be removed when indoors.
- Recruit officers are not permitted to wear sunglasses, except for transitioning prescription lenses, inside the Department building or in formation.
- Sunglasses may never be attached to the uniform in any fashion.

### **Jewelry**

- Pins, insignias, or buttons not specifically issued or authorized by the Department are not to be worn on or attached to any part or portion of the uniform in a manner that they are, or may become, visible to the public. The full list of jewelry standards is outlined in GO-PER-110.11 (Uniform, Equipment, and Appearance Standards), and additional information can be found in Title 6A of DCMR.
- Recruits may wear small, plain stud earrings that are gold, silver, or pearl in color, not to exceed one-half (1/2) inch in diameter. Wearing looped, dangling, or more than two earrings per ear is prohibited.
- Jewelry must not be worn on any other part of the face on duty or in uniform.
- Sworn members shall not wear more than one bracelet or necklace. Attachments such as pendants, charms, and medallions shall be covered.
- Sworn members may not wear more than two rings per hand. Wedding and engagement ring combinations are considered to be one ring.
- Because the nature of police work and academy training can cause damage to jewelry items, the risk of damage should be considered when deciding to wear any jewelry item.

### **Tattoos**

- Tattoos shall be covered when in uniform whenever possible. Any visible tattoo must not contain language or derogatory or offensive characterizations.

## **1.1.3 Differentiate between the types of uniforms for sworn members**

Each member has a prescribed uniform or required type of clothing appropriate for their position. The uniforms found throughout the Department are described below:

## Uniform Guidelines

	Lieutenant and above		Sergeant and below		All Ranks			Guidelines
	Shirt and Blouse	Tie	Shirt and Blouse	Tie or Turtleneck	Jacket	Pants	Headgear	
<b>Class A dress uniform</b>	White long sleeve shirt and blouse	Tie	White long sleeve shirt and blouse	Tie	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All-season trousers</li> <li>Sergeants and below may wear summer pants</li> </ul>	8-point hat	Worn on ceremonial occasions or for certain special events and details as designated by the Chief of Police
<b>Class B service uniform</b>	White long or short sleeve shirt	Tie with long sleeve shirt	Blue long or short sleeve shirt	No tie	Gore-Tex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All-season trousers</li> <li>Sergeants and below may wear summer pants</li> </ul>	8-point hat, baseball cap, skull cap, or trooper-style hat	Baseball caps restricted to members the rank of sergeant and below
<b>BDU</b>	Not authorized	Not authorized	Not authorized	Not authorized	Gore-Tex (modified for civilian wear)	BDU trousers	BDU cap, baseball cap, or skull cap	Worn only by police recruits and civilian members in the following assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Metropolitan Police Academy</li> <li>Cell Block</li> <li>Evidence Control Division</li> <li>Motor Pool</li> <li>Equipment and Supply Branch</li> <li>Vehicle Maintenance</li> <li>Canine Kennel</li> </ul>
Specialized Uniforms								
<b>Approved specialized uniform items</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explosive Ordinance Disposal Section (special fabric)</li> <li>Emergency Response Team (special uniform pants and shirt)</li> <li>Harbor Patrol Unit (foot beat, Segway: special uniform shorts)</li> <li>Motors Unit (special uniform pants and boots)</li> <li>Canine Patrol Unit (special uniform pants and shirt)</li> <li>Mountain Bike Officer (special uniform pants and shorts, black footwear, special high visibility jacket, and bike helmet)</li> <li>Metropolitan Police Academy Range (red shirt)</li> <li>Internal Affairs Division Force Investigation Team (polo shirt and jacket)</li> </ul>							

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### Alternate Authorized Uniform Items

- Turtleneck** – When worn, it must be navy blue and have no visible writing or logos, except for the letters “MPD” in silver embroidered block lettering no larger than 1 inch in height. Recruit officers are not permitted to wear turtlenecks.
- Sweater** – In instances where a sweater may be worn, the below descriptors and guidelines apply. **Recruit officers are not permitted to wear sweaters.**

Shirt Type	Sweater Type	Guidelines
White with a tie	V-neck	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department patch on both shoulders</li> <li>Name plate, badge, and rank insignia displayed</li> </ul>
Navy without a tie	Crew neck	

**Shoes:** When in uniform, plain black shoes must be worn. Shoes may be of the high-top design or military-style boots. Buckle or loafer-type shoes shall not be worn. The brand name, labels, or design logos may not be visible. Shoes soles must be solid black and may not exceed three-quarters (3/4) of an inch thick. Heels may not be more than one-half (1/2) inch in height. Shoes must be clean and in good condition. Shoes must always shine to a luster.

Recruits are required to wear boots that adhere to the specified criteria mentioned above.

### Recruit Officer BDU Uniform

- Nylon or high visibility jacket
- Tan BDU-style long-sleeve shirt
- Plain white crew neck undershirt
- Tan BDU-style pants
- Standard navy-blue baseball-style cap
- Solid navy-blue or black socks
- Any approved boots that can be polished

**NOTE: The Recruit Physical Training (PT) uniform will be discussed during the first day of PT. Please DO NOT buy any items for PT until instructed by your PT instructor. Please arrive at PT wearing your BDU uniform. All uniforms and accessories must be clean, pressed, and neatly polished. Recruit officers are prohibited from altering their uniform in any way, including tapering the shirt or altering the sleeve length.**

### Recruit Officer Civilian Attire

- Recruit officers must wear business attire acceptable in a courthouse. Recruit officers must wear appropriate dress shirts, ties, slacks, skirts, and blouses as appropriate. All recruits shall wear a business suit or sports jacket to prepare them to conceal an issued firearm.
- Sportswear, jeans, tennis shoes, sandals, see-through clothing, and other casual attire shall not be worn. For functional and safety reasons, high heels may not be worn.

### Uniform Exemptions for Religious Purposes

Members of the Sikh faith may wear a turban exclusively, at all times, unless otherwise directed or not permissible due to their assigned duty (e.g., when wearing a riot helmet).

A. Members who wear Sikh turbans shall ensure that:

1. The turban is the same color as the headgear corresponding to MPD uniform requirements.
2. The turban fits snugly on the head so that the top peak of the turban is facing in the front.
3. The MPD cap plate/badge is pinned to the Sikh turban, centered on the front of the turban.
4. Their hair is groomed and secured under their turban.

B. Members of the Sikh faith may wear a Kara (i.e., steel bracelet) as long as the Kara does not interfere with the ability of the member to perform police duties.

C. Members of the Sikh faith who carry a Kirpan (i.e., religious sword) shall ensure the Kirpan has a blade-length no longer than three inches and is worn in a cloth holster (i.e., "Gatra") under the uniform shirt.

D. Bearded members of the Sikh faith shall groom their beard and mustache in a neat and clean manner and tie their beard in a knot that is tucked and held in place under the chin.

**NOTE: In instances where a Sikh member is required to wear a riot helmet, a smaller "under-turban" may be worn under the helmet.**

Members of the Muslim faith may wear a hijab exclusively, at all times.

A. Members wearing a hijab shall ensure that:

1. The hijab is the same color as the headgear corresponding to MPD uniform requirements.
2. The hijab fits snugly on the head.
3. Headgear is worn on top of the hijab, when required.

**NOTE: Members who wear a hijab may elect to wear a specifically-modified hijab with clasps that allow it to come off easily.**

#### **1.1.4 Adhere to MPD uniform and equipment requirements while a recruit**

##### **Uniform Condition**

After issuance of the Recruit BDU uniform, Recruit officers must wear it daily. The uniform may become damaged or no longer serviceable due to police duties and training. In this situation, the Department will reissue necessary uniform items. However, it is the responsibility of the wearer to safeguard the uniform from loss or damage due to neglect or mistreatment.

**NOTE: The “Recruit Officer Training Program” handbook, commonly referred to as the “ROTP handbook,” states that “If any part of the uniform is damaged or altered, rendering it unsuitable for reissue, the Recruit officer is responsible for reimbursing the Department for its replacement cost. In such event, a “Report of Damage to or Loss of District Government Property” for (PD Form 43) shall be prepared and submitted through the Chain of Command.”**

##### **Uniform and Equipment Requirements**

Recruit officers must maintain a complete uniform in their assigned locker at the Metropolitan Police Academy. Any Department-issued items or equipment (e.g., handcuffs, radio, Sam-brown belt, jacket/raincoat) must be kept at the Academy in the Recruit officer’s assigned locker. This practice will continue upon graduation once recruits are assigned to a district.

When responding to and from work, recruits must dress to be unidentifiable as being associated with the Department. Civilian attire must conform to the “Recruit Officer Civilian Attire” standards discussed in section 1.1.3 above and the ROTP handbook.

#### **1.1.5 Demonstrate maintaining and wearing a complete uniform**

##### **MAINTAINING THE UNIFORM**

##### **Pressing the Uniform**

Ironing a uniform is something every officer must know how to do if the uniform is not dry-cleaned. It must be neatly pressed each day an officer reports to work. Additionally, sharp creases are a key detail of a professional appearance.

##### **Polishing Boots**

Brilliantly shined boots are a hallmark of police uniforms. They indicate devotion to duty and attention to the smallest detail. Each polished boot represents hours of patient work. During your time at the Academy, you must maintain boots polished to a luster on the toe and heel. “Polished to a luster” means the toe and heel are shined so that they will reflect light. In the most exceptional cases, boots can be shined so that a person’s reflection may be seen in the finish.

There are many ways to achieve a lustrous shine. There are several steps that all methods must accomplish. The basic steps are:

- Create a workspace
- Prepare the boot
- Apply the base coat
- Apply the polish coat
- Shine
- Finish

### Polishing Brass

When preparing to wear the new brass buckle of either the Garrison belt or the Sam Browne, it must be shined to a luster. When the buckle is new, it will have a clear coating that protects the finish during shipping. Recruits must remove this protective finish by placing the belt buckle in boiling water for a minimum of 10 minutes. Be careful after the buckle is boiled—it must be allowed to cool to room temperature before touching it. Once the clear coating has been removed, the buckle will easily tarnish and must be polished daily.

## ASSEMBLING THE UNIFORM

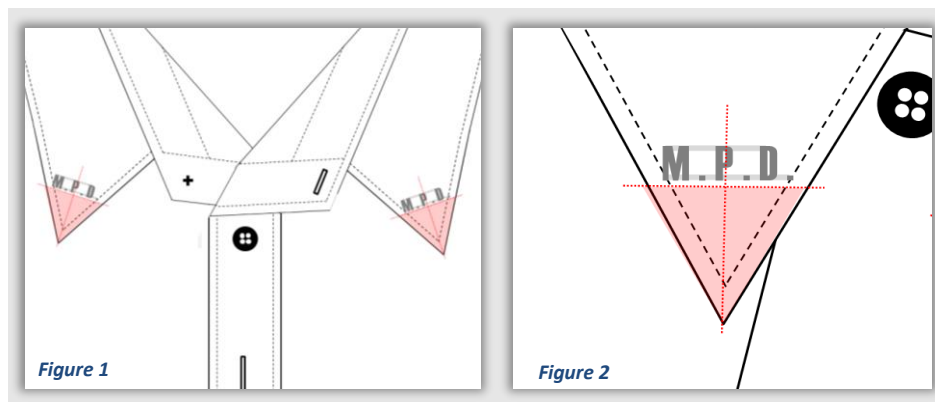
### Collar Pins

The MPD collar pins are one of the most noticeable uniform accessories.

- Each day, a Recruit officer will be inspected, and one point of that inspection will be the placement of the collar pins.
- Sergeants and those in ranks above will wear gold MPD collar pins.
- Other sworn members will wear silver MPD collar pins.

The pin reads “M.P.D.” and is placed so that the lower left corner of the “M” and lower right corner of the last “.” fall at the stitching lines of the collar. If a line were drawn across the base of the pin, the space below the pin would create an isosceles triangle (*See figures 1 & 2 below*).

**Definition: An isosceles triangle is a triangle that has two sides of equal length.**



### Nameplates

Nameplates are issued in two types, which are:

- **The Pin & Safety Catch Nameplate** (*pictured below*) -is intended for use on the jacket, raincoat, or visibility vest and should not be used on the shirt when wearing the Recruit BDU uniform.

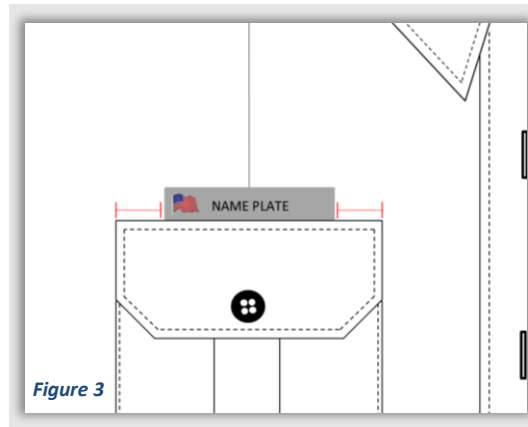


- **The Clutch Back Nameplate** (*pictured below*) - is intended for use on the uniform shirt. The clutch back name plate is also worn on the dress blouse when wearing the Class A Dress and Service uniforms.



**NOTE: Sergeants and below may use a Velcro name tag when wearing a Class B uniform.**

The nameplate must always be worn on the outermost garment to be visible. The nameplate will be centered above the right chest pocket on the uniform shirt. (*See figure 3*).



**NOTE: Once Recruit officers are issued their exterior vest carrier, certain items covered below will be transferred from their duty belt to their exterior vest carrier.**

## BELTS

**Garrison Belt:** According to D.C. Municipal Regulations Title 6A (601.6), members must wear “...plain black belts not less than one and one-fourth (1 1/4) inches but not more than one and three-fourths (1 3/4) inches in width, with a square, solid brass buckle.”

**Nylon Duty Belt** (*pictured below*): The Nylon Duty Belt is required for officers working in the field. It must completely cover the waistband and the inner belt when worn. Additionally, the Nylon Duty Belt must contain the following items, in order, beginning from the support hand side of the belt, crossing the front of the body to the weapon hand side of the belt:





1. ASP
2. OC Spray
3. Magazines
4. Handcuffs
5. Service Pistol



### Nylon Duty Belt – Sergeant



The nylon duty belt should be set up in the following order, beginning at the belt buckle:

#### Weapon Side

1. Handcuff pouch
2. Holster

#### Reaction Side

1. Magazine Pouch
2. ECD
3. ASP
4. OC Spray
5. Radio (optional when wearing a high-visibility jacket)
6. Flashlight (unless on the outer vest)

**NOTE: Members shall mount the ECD on the reaction side of their duty belt (opposite the pistol) in a cross-draw holster or on the reaction side of their outer vest carrier in a cross-draw holster.**

## Vest



### Setting Up Your Vest:

**BWC Mount** – The BWC Mount attaches to the single web loop between the chest pockets of the outer vest carrier.

**Flashlight Pouch** – The flashlight pouch should be positioned on the reaction side nearest the zipper of the outer vest carrier (*the reaction side is the side opposite your pistol*).

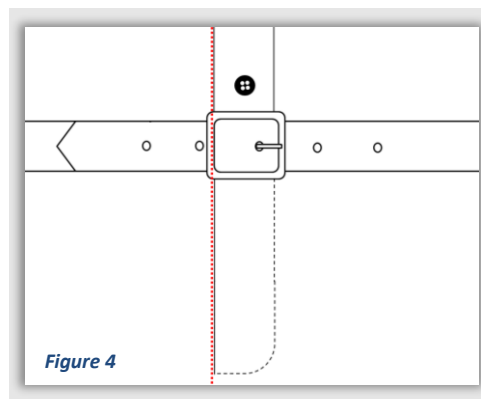
**Radio Pouch** – The radio pouch should be positioned next to the flashlight pouch on the reaction side.

**Utility Pouch** – The utility pouch is optional and, if worn, must be positioned on the weapon side of the zipper.

**NOTE:** Only Department-authorized pouches and equipment may be worn on the outer vest carrier unless approved by the Chief of Police.

### Gig Line

The gig line is the alignment of the right edge of the shirt placket (the flap of the shirt with the buttonholes), the inner right edge of the belt buckle, and the right edge of the pants placket (button fly) (See figure 4).



### Wearing of the Baseball Cap

All recruits and members authorized to wear a baseball cap must adhere to the following criteria. The baseball cap must be worn facing forward on the head and not tipped back or to the side. The front brim shall be on the forehead approximately one and one-half inches above the eyebrows. The hat must appear clean and professional at all times.

## Summary

After today's lesson, you will have the necessary knowledge to present the professional appearance for which you are responsible. The Department has set minimum standards for your appearance, and you will be held to those standards.

With the skills you have learned, you can exceed the standard. Spend the extra time shining your boots to a mirrored finish. Though starch is not required when pressing your uniform, consider using starch to make sure your creases are crisp. Ensure you have extra time each morning before formation to spend an extra minute polishing your brass and straightening your gig line. These few steps will make you stand out above those recruits who do not.

Spending extra effort and time in the Academy to maintain an exceptional professional image will become second nature to you and a habit that will follow you throughout your career. Your appearance and uniform are the first things a community member sees; therefore, you should look clean and professional.

## References

GO-PER-110.11	Uniform, Equipment, and Appearance Standards	November 9, 2023
ROTP	“Recruit Officer Training Program” manual	January, 2015
EO 17-012	Gender Identity and Expression Anti-Discrimination Policy	April 28, 2017
D.C. Municipal Regulations Title 6A (601.6)		