



United States Department of the Interior


NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

DIRECTOR'S ORDER 43: UNIFORM PROGRAM

Approved:


Director, National Park Service

Effective Date: October 1, 2000

Sunset Date: This Order will remain in effect until amended or rescinded

NPS-43, "Servicewide Uniform Program Guideline" (Release No. 2, June 1993), is superseded and replaced by this Director's Order and Reference Manual 43 (RM-43).

Table of Contents

1. Purpose and Scope
2. Background and Goals
3. Authorities
4. Roles and Responsibilities
5. Instructions and Requirements

1. Purpose and Scope

This Director's Order sets forth the policies and procedures necessary to establish, maintain, and administer the National Park Service (NPS) uniform program.

This Director's Order *does not* address:

- Volunteer uniforms [see [Director's Order #7: Volunteers In Parks](#) (VIPs)];
- Concessioner uniforms [see Director's Order #48A: Concession Management];
- Apparel items required for personal protection and safety, other than in a general manner as they relate to the total uniform image [see, e.g., [Director's Order #50B: Occupational Safety and Health](#)]; and
- Apparel items required for specialty tasks [see, e.g., [Director's Orders #4: Diving](#); [#18: Wildland Fire Management](#); [#58: Structural Fire](#); [#51: Emergency Medical Services](#); [#60: Aviation](#); and [#65: Explosives Use and Blasting Safety](#); etc.].
- U.S. Park Police [see U.S. Park Police General Orders].

2. Background and Goals

The Uniform Image

The appearance of uniformed NPS employees greatly influences public perceptions. The uniform and the men and women who wear it, are recognized and respected as symbols of excellence and dedication to resource stewardship and public service. The gray and green colors, distinctive hat, arrowhead patch, and sequoia cones all help to identify NPS employees as stewards of America's special places. Wearing the uniform, therefore, is a privilege and imposes a great responsibility, steeped in tradition. By wearing the uniform, each employee conveys integrity, competence, pride, and approachability. The American people have entrusted the NPS with their most treasured places. As a measure of their pride in that trust, employees must wear the uniform in such a way as to present a competent and confident image to the Nation and to the world.

Accordingly, the goals of the NPS uniform program are to:

- Project a distinct uniform image to park visitors and the American public;
- Foster employee identification with the NPS and employee *esprit de corps*;
- Provide employees with functional, durable, and comfortable clothing which is appropriate for assigned duties and local climates, and fosters employee health and safety;
- Ensure the highest possible degree of consistency in uniform appearance commensurate with the diversity of tasks and climates;
- Maintain a uniform distribution system which provides quality uniforms in a timely manner and is financially accountable and cost-effective; and
- Utilize environmentally preferable and energy-efficient products and services to the extent possible within the needs of the program.

3. Authorities

Authority to issue this Director's Order is contained in 16 USC 1 -- 4 ([NPS Organic Act](#)), and the delegation of authority contained in [Part 245](#) of the Department of the Interior Manual.

Authority to establish the NPS uniform program is contained in [5 USC 5901 -- 5903](#). The NPS uniform program is subject to the annual monetary allowance specified in 16 USC 1a-4.

Use of the NPS arrowhead symbol and badge is governed by [36 CFR Part 11](#). Unauthorized use is a criminal offense, punishable in accordance with 18 USC [641](#) and [701](#).

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 **Associate Director, Visitor and Resource Protection (ADVRP)** will administer and provide policy oversight of the NPS uniform program, including the authority to issue and revise RM-43. The uniform program is located within VRP's Law Enforcement, Security and Emergency Services Division.

4.2 **Uniform Program Manager** will administer the NPS uniform program, direct program implementation and administer the uniform contract.

4.3 **Service-wide Uniform Committee**, chaired by the Uniform Program Manager, will provide support and guidance in the development and revision of uniform policy and the development of apparel items. The 12-member committee will include regional uniform managers (or designees) and one member (or designee) from the advisory councils from each of the following disciplines: ranger activities, interpretation, maintenance, resource management, and administration. In the absence of an advisory council, a field employee will be appointed from the discipline.

4.4 **Regional Directors**, or as delegated, **Associate Regional Director, Park Operations**, will ensure compliance with the Service's uniform standards and administer the uniform program for their regions.

4.5 **Regional Uniform Managers** manage their regional program on a daily basis and provide liaison between parks, the uniform contractor, and the Uniform Program Manager.

4.6 **Superintendents and Managers**, in accordance with the criteria contained in this Director's Order and RM-43, will determine which positions in their parks or offices require wearing of a uniform, and specify the particular uniform(s) to be worn. In addition, they will develop and communicate park uniform and appearance standards in accordance with this Director's Order, and implement sufficient and appropriate controls to insure compliance herewith (see also section 5.4.2, Accountability).

4.7 **Park Uniform Coordinator** will be responsible for administering the uniform program at the park level, as delegated by the superintendent.

4.8 **Supervisors** will regularly evaluate their uniformed subordinates for compliance with this Director's Order, and provide counseling or recommend remedial action for violations of uniform standards. Supervisors will set an example through their own appearance and behavior while in uniform.

4.9 **Employees** whose position requires wearing the NPS uniform will do so in accordance with this Director's Order, the accompanying Reference Manual and approved park uniform standards, and will conduct themselves professionally at all times when in uniform. These are conditions of employment for all uniformed employees. A "Condition of Employment Statement" must be signed *prior to* acceptance of any proffered uniformed position (see [Exhibit A](#)). Proper wearing of the uniform includes: (1) wearing *all* prescribed uniform items; (2) wearing the uniform at all prescribed times; and (3)

maintaining a clean and neat personal appearance (taking into account the nature of work assignments).

5. Instructions and Requirements

5.1 Criteria for Designating Uniformed Positions

5.1.1 *Authorized Wear.* Only NPS employees [i.e., those whose employment requires a Request for Personnel Action (SF-52)] are authorized to wear the NPS uniform.

Occupants of the following positions are authorized to wear the NPS uniform on a full-time or occasional basis, and are provided with a uniform allowance:

- Positions requiring regular and recurring public contact;
- Positions involving duties of any kind that require clear identification with the NPS;
- Positions involving representation of the NPS outside the park or office environment, such as interpretive, informational, or recruitment activities;
- Central office positions involving regular contact with uniformed employees; and
- Other positions that the Superintendent or manager considers essential for the maintenance of morale, team identity, and *esprit de corps*.

5.1.2 *Condition of Employment.* To ensure that incoming employees understand that uniform and personal appearance standards are conditions of employment, the following actions will be taken:

- Vacancy Announcements for uniformed positions will contain a notice that the occupant is required to wear the uniform in accordance with applicable policies, and will be required to sign an acknowledgement letter (see RM43);
- When the selecting official offers the position, verbal notification of the same will be given; and
- The attached letter ([Exhibit A](#)) must be signed and dated by each prospective employee. This must be done *prior to appointment to any uniformed position, regardless of length of NPS service*, and a copy of the letter will be placed in his or her Official Personnel Folder.

5.1.3 *Unauthorized Wear.* Persons not employed by the NPS may not wear any identifiable part of the official NPS uniform, or dress in a manner that attempts to duplicate the appearance thereof. Such persons include:

- VIPs;
- Members of natural history, cooperating, or conservation associations, including the Student Conservation Association, members of Job Corps, Youth Conservation Corps, or other work projects;
- Student interns or students or faculty of cooperative park study units (CPSUs);
- Concession employees; and
- Retired NPS employees.

5.2 Uniform Classes and Categories

5.2.1 Standard Uniform. The three standard types of uniform are: dress, service, and field/work.

5.2.1.a Dress: When selecting this class of uniform to be worn, the rule is to dress up, not down. (Given an option, dressier components are always preferred.) The dress uniform is worn at public events and ceremonies. Managers will prescribe the uniform of the day for the day, dates, or special event. (Historically these have been called Service or Class A uniforms.)

Winter dress—Distinguished by felt flat hat, long-sleeve uniform shirt and tie, dress trousers/skirt, Dress Coat or “Ike” Jacket, USNPS pins, brown dress shoes.

Summer dress—Distinguished by straw hat, short-sleeve uniform shirt, dress trousers, brown dress shoes.

Note that some exceptions to outerwear are appropriate for inclement weather and footwear due to specific duty assignment.

5.2.1.b Service Uniform: The service uniform is our primary identity. It is the year-round uniform for employees whose major duties involve public contact or who are in the public view. There is flexibility in the uniform items where environmental conditions dictate a practical need.

5.2.1.c Field/Work: The standard uniform for employees whose primary duties involve significant physical work, whose public contact work is a secondary function, and where the uniform can reasonably be expected to get soiled, stained, or rumped. Positions typically assigned to this uniform include those engaged in work projects, backcountry, and some resource management duties.

5.2.2 Special Uniforms. Managers may determine that a group/category/employee class needs other special work apparel due to safety and/or environmental conditions. Such items may include, but are not limited to: mountaineering, ski, and snowmobile clothing; painter’s whites; welder’s aprons; firefighting, caving, bicycle patrol, and boat patrol apparel; flight suits; and tool belts. Special work apparel items are not available through the uniform contract but they may be combined with standard uniform components. When specifically required and approved (in a park or program’s uniform standards) for identified duties, these items will be provided by the Government.

Items that are purchased with Government funds are Government property and must be handled in accordance with the provisions of [Director’s Order #44](#): Personal Property Management, and [Director’s Order #50B](#): Occupational Safety and Health (for PPE).

5.2.4 Uniform Items. The Service-wide uniform contractor supplies all components that are authorized as part of the NPS uniform. Only the items supplied by this contractor or specified in Director’s Order #43 and/or RM-43 are authorized for wear as uniform items.

The base colors of ranger green and gray will be selected to provide a number of options for uniform items. The specific color palette is described in RM-43.

5.2.5 *Non-uniform Garments.* Polo, button-down and special event shirts bearing the Arrowhead or the NPS Secondary Mark are available from <https://arrowheadstore.com>. These items can support team unity and *esprit de corps*. Accordingly, they may be worn by non-uniformed employees, and uniformed employees on restricted/light duty, when approved by the employee's supervisor. Such items are purchased at the employee's expense. Appropriated funds cannot be used to purchase non-uniform garments, unless they are being procured as a non-monetary award. (See, e.g., [5 USC 4503](#), regarding honorary awards.)

5.2.6 *Ornaments.* Pins (including length-of-service pins), badges (other than the NPS-issued badge), insignia, ribbons, decorations, pin-on jewelry, and similar items, may not be worn on the uniform. The NPS-issued badge, the NPS-provided name bar, and the American flag pin are the only three ornaments approved for regular wear on the uniform. The ADVRP—or the Uniform Program Manager if delegated the authority by the ADVRP—may approve, in writing, the wearing of special commemorative pins, provided they comply with the provisions of RM-43. The Director or a regional director may approve, in writing, wearing NPS badge covers for a specified, limited time period.

5.2.7 *Pro-Deals.* A pro-deal occurs when outdoor gear and clothing manufacturers sell their products at a substantial discount to individuals engaged in outdoor recreation, emergency response, law enforcement, etc., in hopes that the purchasers will use the gear and recommend it to others, who then have to purchase it from retailers at full price. The use of pro-deals creates the appearance of an endorsement for a product, which is not allowed. Any use of pro-deals requires the concurrence of the Ethics Office. The April 21, 2005, memorandum, subject "Pro Deals (Commercial Discounts) Offered to NPS Employees," is rescinded.

5.2.8 *Co-branding.* Co-branding occurs when two or more brand names function together. It is a marketing effort that seeks to leverage the NPS brand and increase the prominence of a product. Non-NPS logos, names, or other branding features are not authorized on NPS uniforms. The application of the NPS Arrowhead or other NPS brands to specialized equipment is not appropriate when a commercial logo is already on the fabric. Procurement of the clothing without the commercial logo is preferred; if this is not possible, however, a patch may be applied to cover the commercial logo.

5.2.9 *Footwear.* Footwear provided as part of the Service-wide uniform contract is limited, and as such, does not provide for all the particular uses, foot types, and sizes of the entire workforce. Accordingly, employees may purchase footwear at their own expense to meet their particular needs of comfort and performance; provided, however, that such footwear must meet the following color requirements: shoes and boots will be brown or cordovan in color, work boots (which are designed for specific job duties and environmental conditions) will be brown or black in color. Any future changes to footwear color requirements must be approved by the ADVRP.

5.3 Wear and Appearance Standards

5.3.1 Wear Standards. Upon reporting for duty, employees must ensure that they are in the appropriate uniform for scheduled duties, and that uniform components are neat and clean. Commensurate with work assignments, effort will be made to keep the uniform neat throughout the day (for specific recommendations, see RM-43, Subpart A, section 3).

5.3.2 Personal Appearance and Grooming Standards. Personal appearance and grooming standards for all uniformed employees are necessary to achieve the desired image as articulated in section 2 above. The following further clarifies the Service-wide objectives that will be achieved:

- Maintain a neutral image that encourages approachability and interaction with the broadest spectrum of the visiting public;
- Ensure employee safety;
- Project a positive appearance which the public has come to associate with the NPS while embracing diversity;
- Promote relations with cooperating organizations with similar standards; and
- Maintain good order and discipline, which are integral to uniformity among all uniformed employees.

RM-43, Subpart A, section 3, articulates personal appearance and grooming standards based on job function. Grooming standards for commissioned law enforcement personnel are contained in Reference Manual 9. These standards include items of **personal adornment**.

5.3.3 Exemptions from Requirements

5.3.3.a Exemptions to the wear and appearance standards may be granted upon written request based on the following categories: (1) health and safety; (2) employee assigned to covert or undercover operations; (3) the employee is a costumed interpreter, or (4) accommodation for individuals pursuant to equal employment opportunity policy and regulations. It is the NPS's policy that no individual will be discriminated against on the basis of race, sex, color, national origin, religion, age, sexual orientation, or status as a parent. The NPS may make reasonable accommodations to the known physical and mental limitations of employees with disabilities unless the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the operation on the NPS (see also section 5.5).

5.3.3.b A *regional director* may grant individual exemptions from uniform wear and appearance standards in this Order on a case-by-case basis, only on determination of the superintendent, regional review and coordination with the Office of the Solicitor. Blanket exemptions are prohibited.

5.3.3.c A *medical doctor* having professional expertise in the field of the stated problem must sign **medical and health exemption requests**. The statement must correlate the condition with the uniform or appearance standard. Managers or supervisors may require the employee to obtain a second, independent occupational medical evaluation. If findings

of the subsequent evaluation conflict with the justification provided in the original request, a park and/or regional employee relations specialist will review the case and submit a recommendation to the regional director for final decision.

5.3.3.d A *regional-level, employee-relations specialist* will review **religious exemption requests**.

(See also Director's Order #93: Conflict Resolution)

5.4 Program Administration

5.4.1 *Uniform Ownership and Use*

5.4.1.a *Uniform* items purchased with uniform allowances or personal funds become the property of the employee once they are received and accepted by the employee. From time of shipment until acceptance, uniform items are property of the government and are under the administrative control of the receiving area as accountable property.

5.4.1.b *Employees* may not acquire uniform components for any other person either with their uniform allowance or with personal funds.

5.4.1.c *Special work apparel* items that are purchased with government funds are government property and must be handled in accordance with the provisions of Director's Order #44: Personal Property Management, and Director's Order #50B: Occupational Health and Safety (for personal protective equipment).

5.4.1.d The *NPS arrowhead and badge* symbols are the property of the Federal government. The use of these symbols is restricted to official activities (including uses authorized through the Arrowhead Products line). Employees and former employees may wear retired uniform components off-duty, provided that the NPS arrowhead and badge have been removed (see also Director's Order #44: Personal Property Management for disposition of insignia.).

5.4.1.e *Disposition of retired uniform items*. To insure the integrity of the NPS uniform and its components, and to safeguard against possible misuse of said items, employees should always remove arrowhead patches, badges, name bars/patches, hatbands and belts before donating unusable garments to charity or use as rags. Retired badges (due to broken pins, excessive wear, other), must be turned over to a property officer and disposed of in accordance with Director's Order #44.

5.4.2 *Accountability*

Regional directors and superintendents will set up and conduct annual evaluations of their uniform programs and compliance with this Director's Order and the accompanying Reference Manual.

5.4.3 *Uniform Allowances and Accounting*

5.4.3.a *Uniform Allowances and Replacement Allowances.* Pursuant to [5 CFR 591.103](#), and absent any other specific provision of law or regulation, uniform and replacement allowances will be set as provided in RM-43. Such allowances are provided to help defray the cost of wearing a uniform. *They are not intended to completely cover the cost of all uniform needs.*

See RM-43, Subpart B, for uniform allowance authorizations and administrative processes.

5.4.3.b *Cost Account:* All uniform allowance funds, as authorized by the uniform allowance authorization process, will be held in account number PPWOVPADZI PPMPSAS1Z.YU0000.

5.5 Park Uniform Standards

Written park uniform standards, in conformity with RM-43, Subpart A, section 4, are required for each area. Such standards will specify which of the uniform options authorized by this Director's Order will apply in a particular park, office, or team. Where local options are authorized (including exceptions for costumed interpretation, covert operations, specialty tasks, health and safety), superintendents will ensure uniformity within their areas (see also section 5.3.3.a.) Where there is a question of which class of uniform or option to choose, the rule is to dress up, not down. Park uniform standards must be submitted to the regional director for approval.

Park standards will be brief and follow the template provided in RM-43, Subpart A, Section 4.

5.6 Seasonal Uniform Wear

The various uniform classes have winter and summer uniform components. However, in order to allow for greater individual and seasonal flexibility—and taking into account both climate and the nature of work an employee is performing—fixed seasons and transition periods for uniforms are discontinued. This will permit, for example, wearing long-sleeve shirts in the summer for UV protection, or wearing cargo pants with a uniform shirt.

----- *End of Director's Order* -----