

Wearing of uniform and personal appearance

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Contents

1	Introduction	2
2	Purpose of uniform.....	2
3	Description of uniform.....	2
4	Uniform when not at incidents.....	3
5	Uniform at fires and other operational incidents.....	4
6	Other aspects of uniform	4
7	Wearing of uniform when off duty.....	5
8	Personal appearance.....	5
	Appendix 1 – Types of uniform – summarised list of components.....	7
	Appendix 2 – Wearing medals – order of precedence.....	8
	Appendix 3 – Hair length and style.....	11
	Document history	12
	Freedom of Information Act exemptions	13

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Every member of staff is expected to maintain a professional appearance at all times, as a representative of the London Fire Brigade.
- 1.2 The standards outlined in this policy are to be met by all uniformed operational staff whilst on duty. Staff working at Brigade Control are to refer to [Policy number 936](#) – Control staff room uniform.
- 1.3 Uniform is to be worn correctly at all times. It is the expectation that operational staff shall wear workwear or undress uniform whilst on duty, when not required to wear PPE or other specialist items relevant to their role. Any exceptions must be expressly agreed by a line manager at watch manager or above.

2 Purpose of uniform

- 2.1 The purpose of providing different uniform clothing is to:
 - Provide appropriate protection and safety whilst at work;
 - Project a professional and smart image of the Brigade;
 - Clearly identify Brigade staff to the public;
 - Provide staff with functional and durable clothing that is appropriate to different types of duty.
- 2.2 A high standard of appearance is to be maintained at all times. All uniform should be kept cleaned and pressed except where special cleaning arrangements apply, e.g. personal protective equipment (PPE). No item of uniform is to be altered by Brigade personnel that would result in a change in appearance of the item of clothing in relation to its design. With the exception of PPE clothing (i.e. structural firefighting uniform) alterations to ensure a better fit can be made, at the employees own expense, with the approval of their line manager. Staff should not approach any manufacturer or procure any garment without first seeking advice from the Procurement Department by emailing the Helpdesk (Purchasing Unit HQ) and obtaining approval from the Head of Procurement.
- 2.3 Any person who makes an unauthorised alteration to, or wilfully damages, an item of uniform may be liable to disciplinary action.

3 Description of uniform

- 3.1 There are four standard uniforms for operational staff:
 - Operational PPE;
 - Undress;
 - Workwear (trainee firefighter to watch manager);
 - Half undress (for station managers and above – this is defined as undress uniform without cap and jacket, shirt sleeves buttoned to cuff).
- 3.2 Additional PPE is issued to staff carrying out specialist roles, for example urban search and rescue (USAR) personnel, fire rescue unit (FRU) technicians, and fire boat crews. No alternative items of workwear will be issued for any role.
- 3.3 Some items of maternity wear are available, and further information and advice can be sought from the maternity adviser. Contact details for the maternity adviser can be obtained from the People Services helpdesk.
- 3.4 Any items that are a recognised requirement of a person's faith may be worn at work, as long as the item satisfies standards of appearance and health and safety issues.

- 3.5 A list of the various items of clothing/equipment that make up each uniform is set out in Appendix 1. A full list, together with the scale of issue for staff at different roles, can be found in [Policy number 533](#) – Uniform and personal protective equipment.

4 Uniform when not at incidents

- 4.1 The standard uniform to be worn by operational staff when on duty and not at incidents is set out in the following sections.

Staff at fire stations

- 4.2 At fire stations:
- Firefighter to watch manager – workwear;
 - Station manager – half undress.
- 4.3 The only exception to workwear at fire stations is PPE, which is to be worn at roll call by all staff up to and including watch manager, and for other station based activities as required.

Operational staff not at fire stations (including fire safety)

- 4.4 The standard uniform to be worn by operational staff not based at fire stations (e.g. staff based in offices or at training centres) is as follows:
- Firefighter to watch manager – undress or workwear;
 - Station manager and above – half undress.

General guidance and variations

- 4.5 The following general guidance and variations on the wearing of uniform apply to all operational staff:
- Role markings are to be worn by all personnel at all times.
 - Caps (all roles) – caps will not normally be worn except at the discretion of the officer in charge; events where caps will be worn include formal outdoor public events such as parades, or when forming honour guards.
 - A white shirt worn as part of undress uniform must be worn with a tie.
 - The white shirt may be worn, as appropriate, with an open neck and top button only undone.
 - The blue workwear shirt and white blouse both have an open-neck and are not to be worn with a tie.
 - Long sleeved shirts/blouses should be buttoned at the wrist **or** the sleeves are to be rolled neatly above the elbow.
 - Shirts and t-shirts are to be worn tucked into the trouser/skirt waistband at all times.
 - When on station, shirts and t-shirts will be worn together by all watch managers and below unless the task being undertaken makes this impractical. Depending on the type of duties to be undertaken and on weather conditions, any appropriate combination of shirt, tee shirt, sweatshirt and jacket with workwear trousers is allowed.
 - When off station (not in PPE), a standard approach is essential, therefore shirts and t-shirts will be worn together by all watch managers and below in combination with sweatshirts or jackets as appropriate to seasonal or weather conditions.
- 4.6 Operational staff must also wear their uniform on the following occasions:
- When attending training courses (including the Fire Service College) – the dress for training courses will be specified in course joining instructions.

- When attending interviews (including promotion interviews or disciplinary hearings) – undress uniform unless otherwise specified by the officer conducting/organising the interview.
- When attending court representing the Brigade – undress uniform.
- When required to carry out official business during an off duty period (e.g. to attend for a medical examination; or a special occasion when representing the Brigade) – either workwear or undress uniform as appropriate to the event or as specified by event organiser.
- An individual travelling on duty between Brigade premises or to other locations will wear workwear or undress uniform, as appropriate, but will not wear PPE.

5 Uniform at fires and other operational incidents

- 5.1 Operational staff attending incidents or training exercises should wear appropriate uniform/PPE applicable to their role or as instructed by the officer in charge.
- 5.2 Drivers are to change into PPE as soon as possible after arrival at an incident or exercise.

6 Other aspects of uniform

Cap badges

- 6.1 The cap badge is to be attached to the front of the cap centrally, so that it is vertical and the centre points of the star are in line with the red piping.

Role markings

- 6.2 Role markings must be clearly visible at all times. They may only be worn on:
 - Undress uniform.
 - Shirts/blouses.
 - Sweatshirts.
 - Workwear jacket.
 - Overcoats.

Wearing of orders, decorations and medals (including medal ribbons)

- 6.3 Staff entitled to wear medals may wear the appropriate ribbon(s) on their undress uniform jacket. The decorations, as distinct from the ribbons, are to be worn on such ceremonial occasions as directed by the Commissioner.
- 6.4 The only ribbons that may be worn are those of orders, decorations and medals awarded by the Crown or by the head of government of a foreign state, awards made by the Royal Humane Society, the Royal National Lifeboat Institution and the Society for Protection of Life from Fire, and medals awarded for bravery, meritorious service or long service and good conduct by local authorities. Not more than one ribbon for long service and good conduct is to be worn.
- 6.5 For the order of precedence for wearing medals see Appendix 2.

Ceremonial and display dress

- 6.6 The dress to be worn by operational staff taking part in a display, pageant or special ceremony organised by the Brigade is to be decided by the officer in charge of the ceremony. The dress may, at his/her discretion, be other than that prescribed elsewhere in this policy.

- 6.7 Operational staff nominated to take part in ceremonies organised by other bodies (e.g. the Remembrance Day ceremony at the Cenotaph and the Field of Remembrance Ceremony at Westminster Abbey) are to wear the dress prescribed by the organisers.
- 6.8 Unless prescribed by the organisers of a ceremony, women may choose to wear an undress skirt, as an alternative to wearing trousers. If the undress skirt is worn, women may also choose to wear their own footwear, as long as they are black and maintain a professional standard of appearance in keeping with undress uniform.
- 6.9 If undress uniform is specified, it must be worn with a cap. The jumper is not to be worn.
- 6.10 Operational staff may wear a single standard red British Legion poppy at the appropriate time of year and these may be worn when on outside duties. A poppy is not to be worn on PPE.

7 Wearing of uniform when off duty

- 7.1 Operational staff will **not** wear any item of PPE whilst off duty.
- 7.2 Operational staff are not to wear Brigade uniform whilst off duty unless travelling to or from home and place of work, or other occasions as specified in 4.6.
- 7.3 A trainee firefighter undergoing instruction in a training centre is not to wear his/her uniform when off duty other than when given specific permission to do so by the officer in charge of the training centre.

8 Personal appearance

- 8.1 Operational staff should be mindful of the fact that health and safety, equalities standards and professional image requirements form a framework of legitimate expectations within which individual responsibility and judgement should be exercised. In cases of doubt seek advice from Central Operations.

Showering/bathing

- 8.2 Operational staff wishing to shower or bathe following operational incidents or training should be allowed such time as is reasonable. Staff are not to bathe/shower unless they have been placed 'off the run' by the officer in charge. Staff will not shower or bathe at other times whilst available for operational incidents.

Hair

- 8.3 When on duty operational staff shall wear their hair so that it is neat and tidy and no risk to their safety. To achieve this hair should be cut or worn in a way that enables the above requirement to be met and does not represent a hazard to the wearer or to anyone else. This would include compromising the fit of the fire helmet or BA face mask or any other article of personal protective equipment, impeding hearing or vision, and/or presenting a risk of entanglement or distraction.
- 8.4 Staff will take personal responsibility for ensuring their hairstyle is acceptable. If there are any serious concerns regarding health and safety aspects of a particular hairstyle, this must be addressed in liaison with Health and Safety Services.
- 8.5 Officers should, at all times, remember their responsibility:
- Under health and safety legislation to secure and monitor the health and safety of themselves and their staff.

- To be fair and equitable in the interpretation and application of the Brigade policies and procedures.
- 8.6 Further guidance on hair is available in [Policy number 476](#) – Respiratory protective equipment – breathing apparatus – dragger pss7000 – technical information.

Make-up (cosmetic and prescribed)

- 8.7 Operational staff may, where appropriate, wear eye make-up and lipstick while on duty, but not any facial cosmetic make-up or prescribed camouflage make-up, (including to cover facial birth marks etc.), that could come into direct contact with the face mask seal of a breathing apparatus set. Care must be taken when putting on the face mask as any contact with make-up may degrade the rubber seal.

Wearing jewellery and body ornamentation at work

- 8.8 Whilst the Brigade recognises the individual's right to have their body pierced, certain piercings may present a hazard in the workplace. Subject to 8.1, and where the employer considers that the piercing presents a hazard in the work place, they are under a legal duty to take steps to remove the hazard, or reduce the risk to an acceptable level.
- 8.9 Once appropriate measures have been established to ensure safety, it is the employee's legal duty to co-operate with their employer so as to make sure these measures remain effective.
- 8.10 The risks associated with wearing jewellery and body decorations at work have been assessed taking account of professional advice from Health and Safety Services, Occupational Health Services, General Counsel and the Inclusion Team. These assessments will be available on the HSS website. Any item of jewellery must remain inside their personal protective equipment at all times, or be taped.
- 8.11 Depending on the part of the body being pierced and the type of item to be worn, the healing process can take up to 8 weeks. It is therefore necessary for employees to make sure that body piercing does not affect their ability to attend work and carry out their normal duties. Where staff wish to have a body piercing, they must take account of the time necessary to allow the healing process to complete.
- 8.12 Where employees wish to wear any other type of ornamentation, permission must be sought from their line manager first so that a risk assessment may be completed and a decision taken on the results.
- 8.13 Finger nails (including any extensions) must be kept to a length that allows PPE (any type of glove) to be worn correctly and allow the wearer to operate equipment and manipulate objects. The style or length of finger nails must not damage/pierce either surgical or nitrile gloves. Finger nails that do not meet these requirements must be trimmed. Nail varnish may be worn, subject to the standards of appearance being satisfied.

Appendix 1 – Types of uniform – summarised list of components

Firefighting uniform

- Fire helmet complete with visor.
- Fire hood.
- Fire coat/tunic with ancillary equipment: whistle (with strap), Emergency Action Code (EAC) card, belt line (trainee firefighter to watch manager A) and resuscitation pack.
- Fire boots and over-trousers.
- Firefighting gloves.

Note: There is no requirement to wear the fire hood when not committed to a fire or hazard area of a cylinder incident. This is subject to confirmation of the incident commander following a risk assessment.

When the fire hood is worn, it must be put on donned prior to the fire coat/tunic and worn in accordance with the personal issue fire hood guidance note. The only clothing to be worn underneath the firefighting tunic and over trousers is to be standard-issue uniform.

Undress uniform

- Shirt/blouse and epaulettes.
- Tie (unless a blouse is worn).
- Jacket, undress*.
- Skirt, undress
- Trousers, undress.
- Socks.
- Shoes.
- Cap, with enamel badge.
- Jumper, optional.
- Tights.

* A jumper may be worn in place of the undress jacket in the circumstances set out in this policy.

Work-wear uniform

Trainee firefighter to watch manager

- Jacket with embroidered badge and LFB logo.
- Shirt, blue with epaulettes, embroidered badge and LFB logo.
- Epaulette role markings to be worn with jackets, sweatshirt or shirt.
- Trousers, blue LFB logo on tax tab.
- Tee shirt, red with LFB logo.
- Sweat shirt, blue, embroidered badge and LFB logo.
- Socks.
- Shoes.

Station manager and above

Workwear uniform for station managers and above is as undress uniform, but not including jacket and cap.

Fitness training

Staff are permitted to wear any appropriate fitness clothing which they provide at their own cost.

Appendix 2 – Wearing medals – order of precedence

Orders, decorations and medals are only to be worn on the undress uniform jacket; medals should never be worn on workwear or white shirts. Any staff member possessing a medal not listed below should ask Central Operations for further information.

Official orders, decorations and medals should be worn on the left breast in the following order:

1 Orders (examples)

The Distinguished Service Order.
The Order of the British Empire (Class IV).
The Royal Victorian Order (Class V).

2 Decorations (examples)

Distinguished Service Cross (Naval).
Military Cross.
Order of St. John.
Queens Volunteer Reserve Medal.

Gallantry awards (examples)

George Cross.
George Medal.
Queens Gallantry Medal.
Queen's Commendation for Bravery.

3 Campaign medals

By date of award.

4 Jubilee medals

Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee Medal.
Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal.
Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal.

5 Efficiency and Long Service decorations and medals

Accumulated Campaign Service Medal.
Army Long Service and Good Conduct Medal.
Naval Long Service and Good Conduct Medal.
Medal for Meritorious Service (all services).
Royal Air Force Long Service and Good Conduct Medal.
Cadet Forces Medal.
Volunteer Reserve Medal.
Fire Brigade Long Service and Good Conduct Medal.
Service Medal of the Order of St. John.

6 Foreign Orders, Decorations and Medals (where approved)

Foreign Orders in order of date of award.
 Foreign Decoration in order of date of award.
 Foreign Medals in order of date of award.

Formal authority from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is required to wear any foreign order, decoration or medal, as well as agreement from the Commissioner.

7 Mention in Despatches (M.I.D.)

The single bronze oak leaf emblem is worn on the ribbon of the appropriate medal. If a medal has not been granted, the emblem is worn directly on the coat after any medal ribbon.

8 Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service (Q.C.V.S.)

The spray of oak leaves in silver is worn directly on the coat, after any medal ribbons.

9 Medals to be worn on the right breast:

The Stanhope Gold Medal.
 Other Medals of the Royal Humane Society.
 Medals of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution.
 Medals of the Society for the Protection of Life from Fire.
 Bravery of Meritorious Service.
 Life-Saving Medal of the order of St. John.
 Bravery or Meritorious Service.
 Long Service and Good Conduct.

Dress regulations – orders, decorations and medals

- Orders, decorations or medals are worn on left breast (unless listed in section 10 above) to form a single brooch, no part of which is to be visible (court mounted).
- The most senior medal (see order of precedence) is furthest from the left shoulder. The obverse of the medals should show (this will usually be the sovereign's head, coat of arms, cipher, etc.).
- If more than five medals are worn, they should not be suspended side by side, but overlapped, the senior medal and ribbon is the one to be positioned so it can be seen completely. Medals should be lined up straight by the bottom rim/point, the length of ribbon should be 1¼" (33mm) from the top of the mount to the first clasp or the suspension, whichever is appropriate. Where the awards differ in size then a ribbon adjustment will be necessary to ensure a straight line.

Ribbons of orders, decorations and medals

- When ribbons are worn without the decorations or medals they are to be 3/8" (10mm) in length and the ribbons are to be worn immediately above the pocket. The ribbon or ribbons are to be placed centrally along this line, as per POMS issue.
- Where only one ribbon is held, this is to be so placed that the centre of the ribbon is in a direct line with the pocket button on the jacket.
- Up to five ribbons can be accommodated in one row before another is started. There is not to be a space between rows and an incomplete row should be placed above the top complete row. The order of precedence listed above is to be maintained.
- Ribbons are not to be worn on outdoor coats.

10 Medal coverings

The use of celluloid or other representations of, or transparent covering to, ribbons is forbidden.

11 Medals worn at investitures

The only medals mentioned in paragraphs 10 to 16 that may be worn at investitures are the Stanhope Gold Medal, medals of the Royal Humane Society, medals of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution and the Life-Saving medal of the Order of St. John.

Example of ribbons:



Stud brooch as issued in POMS.

Appendix 3 – Hair length and style

Health and safety

It is not acceptable to expect that all Brigade staff must have hair cut off the collar and above the ears. However, there are a number of general duties of care that employers have in relation to ensuring the health and safety of its employees. Broadly, these duties are underpinned by the principle of 'reasonable practicability'. The key consideration from a safety perspective is the style in which the hair is worn.

Operational activities

Current practice is for full PPE to be worn in virtually all operational situations (this is only relaxed under certain well defined circumstances where safety cannot be compromised). When firefighting this means wearing the helmet, fire hood and BA facemask. In these situations the hairstyle must not compromise (or potentially reduce) the effectiveness of the PPE. Also, it must not prevent the proper 'sitting' of the helmet or the BA facemask on the head which will guarantee that the designed protective capability of these items is maintained.

The Brigade can reasonably expect head protection to fit where it has made provision for a range of sizes but it would be unreasonable to assume that this sizing can account for an infinite range of hairstyle as well as being fit for purpose.

In firefighting activities, the combination of helmet, fire hood, fire coat/tunic and BA provides an integrated system of protection and is capable of accommodating a range of hairstyles. If worn correctly, it will reduce the likelihood of the wearer being injured.

In non-fire situations, staff who wish to wear their hair longer must assess how they can control their hair to guarantee it does not become an entanglement or entrapment hazard. For example, they will have to consider wearing the fire hood at special service calls or find other means of securing the hairstyle to guarantee safety.

So the key test to whether a hairstyle is acceptable becomes the ability to wear PPE properly, safely and comfortably. This test is further supplemented by making sure hearing and vision are not affected by the hairstyle and in circumstances where full PPE may not be worn there is no significant risk of entrapment or entanglement in machinery, etc. Here the responsibility is on the employee to wear or secure the hair in such a way as to prevent this from happening.

Document history

Assessments

An equality, sustainability or health, safety and welfare impact assessment and/or a risk assessment was last completed on:

EIA	08/08/2011	SDIA	03/08/2011	HSWIA		RA	
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Audit trail

Listed below is a brief audit trail, detailing amendments made to this policy/procedure.

Page/para nos.	Brief description of change	Date
Throughout	Policy reviewed as current and major changes made throughout. Appendices and main content revised with new notes and bullet points added to reflect current policy. Please read through to familiarise yourself with the content.	15/10/2011
Throughout	Policy reviewed as current. EIA and SIA completed and amendments made throughout. Please read to familiarise yourself with the content.	11/08/2011
Throughout	Minor amendments made throughout, please read to familiarise yourself with the content.	06/01/2012
Throughout	Policy reviewed as current. EIA and SIA completed and amendments made throughout. Please read to familiarise yourself with the content.	12/08/2014
Page 12	Subject list and FOIA exemptions tables updated.	16/12/2014
Throughout	Reviewed as current, all references to the Corporate Management Team changed to Inclusion Team.	13/12/2017
Page 4	Minor amendment made to paragraph 6.3	14/08/2018
Page 1	Owner title/Department name changed in line with the introduction of the London Fire Commissioner which now replaces the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority.	15/10/2018
Throughout	Changes made to team/department names to reflect the change in organisational governance (the abolition of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority).	05/12/2018
Page 2, para 1.2	Reference to policy number 148 removed and replaced with policy 936.	07/01/2019
Page 6, para 8.6	Updated reference to hair policy number 476.	25/04/2019

Subject list

You can find this policy under the following subjects.

Uniform	Personal appearance

Freedom of Information Act exemptions

This policy/procedure has been securely marked due to:

Considered by: (responsible work team)	FOIA exemption	Security marking classification