

Keeping People Safe



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2022-00778

Keyword: Organisational Information/Governance

Subject: Updated Uniform Service Procedure

Request and Answer:

Your request for information has now been considered. In respect of Section 1(1)(a) of the Act we can confirm that the Police Service of Northern Ireland does hold information to which your request relates. The decision has been taken to disclose the following.

With the introduction of the new style of uniform, please could you provide the updated service procedure in respect of uniform wearing.

Request 1

The service procedure number which details the wearing of uniform. Date of introduction and when next review is due.

Answer

Corporate Appearance and Protective Equipment Standard (CAPES) is produced by the Uniform and Protective Measures Committee (UAPM) to ensure that there is a corporate approach to the wearing of approved uniform and equipment. It is not a service procedure and as such it doesn't have an associated number. The launch of the new uniform came into effect on 31st January 2022 and with CAPES being a living document as such it is constantly under review and amendment.

Request 2

The instructions regarding to the standard of uniform to be worn by response personnel including neighbourhood officers.

Answer

There are 5 main uniform types, the nature of which will be dictated by the role the officers are being asked to perform at the given time.

Request 3

Occasions when the public should expect to see officers wearing forage caps.

Answer

The PSNI issues many different types of headwear including the forage cap, the patrol cap, the woollen hat and the public order helmet. Headwear must be worn at all times when performing uniform duties in public, unless in a vehicle or otherwise prevented by the urgency or nature of the

particular duty.

Request 4

When the baseball cap head wear is acceptable.

Answer

The Patrol Cap is part of the Number 3, 4, & 5 uniform.

Request 5

The wearing of jewellery, including the number of earrings deemed to be acceptable, (I've heard of upwards of five earrings being worn in each ear by officers, which I feel is excessive).

Answer

The wearing of jewellery whilst on duty could, in certain circumstances, present an unnecessary risk of injury to police officers, police staff and members of the public.

The only items of jewellery that a police officer or member of police staff are permitted to have visible whilst on public facing duties are a wristwatch, wedding ring, engagement ring, civil or other partnership ring and signet ring. Rings with prominent stones or settings should not be worn on duty due to the risk of injury they present both to the wearer and to others with whom the individual comes into contact. The Police Service does not accept any liability for the damage or loss of these items.

No items of jewellery may be worn through the nose, eyebrows, lips, ears, tongue or any other visible part of the body by police officers or police staff when engaged with the public during their tour of duty.

Request 6

The acceptable wearing of hair, what instructions are in place regarding long hair and the health and safety instructions of having long hair to prevent injury in any confrontation or public order scenario.

Answer

Hair should at all times be clean, neat and tidy. In the interests of health and safety, hair should be worn so that it is cut or secured above the collar (unless there are religious, cultural or medical reasons). Extreme hairstyles, colour, patterns and motifs may detract from the professional image of PSNI and are not permitted.

Request 7

Confirm if Sgt are the first line of enforcement of standards, and if uniformity of dress is required to be given at start of shift.

Answer

Supervisors have a responsibility to maintain high standards of appearance by providing direction and guidance and by applying this Corporate Appearance and Protective Equipment Standard in a manner compatible with Human Rights. It is primarily the duty of the supervisor to ensure that the directions in this document are adhered to by police officers and police staff under their supervision. Two officers patrolling together in differing modes of dress should be sent to change to ensure they are dressed the same.

Request 8

The wearing of name badges, tietacs. poppies. Name badges do not appear to be worn by constables.

Answer

- All uniform police officers will wear name badges. Where a District Commander believes that all police officers in their area should not wear name badges on the grounds of

security, a risk assessment will be carried out by the Commander and kept on record. The Commander will review the decision on a monthly basis and record reasons for extending the exemption or removing it as the case may be.

- Police officers and police staff, whether in uniform or plain clothes, will not wear any badges or emblems save those permitted in the PSNI's CAPES document or otherwise authorised by the Chief Constable.
- One moderate plain poppy or small poppy ornament may be worn voluntarily and in a respectful manner on Remembrance Sunday and from the period of the launch of the Poppy Appeal by the Royal British Legion until Remembrance Sunday, or Armistice day, whichever is later. **The poppy or poppy ornament must not show or suggest any affiliation with any existing or past organisation**, and can be worn in a respectful manner anywhere on the officers uniform.
- The poppy may also be worn at other memorial events (for example in remembrance of the death of a police officer), which take place in local stations or elsewhere and fall outside this period.
- A small sprig of shamrock may be worn in a similarly respectful manner, only on the 17th March, St Patrick's Day.
- Tie pins and badges must not be worn.

If you have any queries regarding your request or the decision please do not hesitate to contact me on 028 9070 0164. When contacting the Corporate Information Branch, please quote the reference number listed at the beginning of this letter.

If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review. You should do this as soon as possible or in any case within two months of the date of issue of this letter. In the event that you require a review to be undertaken, you can do so by writing to the Head of Corporate Information Branch, PSNI Headquarters, 65 Knock Road, Belfast, BT5 6LE or by emailing foi@psni.pnn.police.uk.

If, following an Internal Review carried out by an independent decision maker, you remain dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you may make a complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office, under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, and ask that they investigate whether the PSNI has complied with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act. You can write to the Information Commissioner at 'Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF', or use the ICO self-service portal available at www.ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/officialinformation-concerns-report/official-information-concern/

In most circumstances, the Information Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out however, the Commissioner has the option to investigate the matter at their discretion.

Please be advised that PSNI replies under Freedom of Information may be released into the public domain via our website @ www.psni.police.uk

Personal details in respect of your request have, where applicable, been removed to protect confidentiality.