

Wearing of uniform and personal appearance

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Members of staff are expected to maintain a professional appearance at all times when representing the London Fire Brigade.
- 1.2 The standards outlined in this policy are to be met by all uniformed operational staff whilst on duty, including when carrying out light duties. Staff working at Brigade Control should refer to Policy number 936 – Control room staff uniform.
- 1.3 Uniform is to be worn correctly at all times. When not required to wear PPE or other specialist items relevant to a role and associated specific task, operational staff should wear workwear or undress uniform whilst on duty. Any exceptions must be expressly agreed by a line manager at station/sub officer level or above.
- 1.4 Failure to comply with this policy could result in disciplinary action.

2 Purpose of uniform

- 2.1 The purpose of providing uniform clothing is to:
 - Provide appropriate protection and safety whilst at work.
 - Project a professional image.
 - 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 clean and ironed except where special cleaning arrangements apply, e.g. personal protective equipment (PPE). No item of uniform is to be altered by Brigade personnel such that it would result in a change in appearance or design of the item. With the exception of PPE clothing (i.e. structural firefighting uniform) alterations to ensure a better fit can be made, at the employee's own expense and with the approval of their officer in charge. Staff should not approach any manufacturer or procure any garment without first seeking advice from the Technical and Commercial Services Department by emailing the Helpdesk (Purchasing Unit HQ) and obtaining approval from the Assistant Director, Technical and Commercial Services or their delegated representative. Any alterations to structural PPE will be carried out by the contractor; requests to be made as in Policy Number 693 - structural firefighting personal protective equipment (PPE).
- 2.3 Any person who makes an unauthorised alteration to, or wilfully damages an item of uniform may be liable to disciplinary action.
- 2.4 Unauthorised insignia (including patches and badges) are not to be worn on uniform or PPE.

3 Description of uniform

- 3.1 There are three standard uniforms for operational staff:
 - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
 - Undress
 - Workwear
- 3.2 Some items of maternity wear are available, further information and advice can be sought from People Services via the HR helpdesk.

- 3.3 Some items of uniform that are a recognised requirement of a person's faith can be worn at work with the approval of the officer in charge, providing the items satisfy standards of appearance and health and safety requirements.
- 3.4 A list of the various items of clothing/equipment that make up each uniform (standard firefighting uniform, undress and workwear) is set out in Appendix 1. Items not specified in the list may not be worn, unless it is an approved Brigade alternative clothing. If alternative clothing is being worn as part of tag or specific role, standard workwear uniform (set out in Appendix 1) must be worn once the activity has been completed. Workwear is the default uniform, a full list, together with the scale of issue for staff can be found in Policy number 533 – Uniform and personal protective equipment excluding structural firefighting PPE.

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 sub officer – workwear.
 - Station officer and above – workwear or 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 station officer, 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 all operational staff not based at fire stations (e.g. staff based in offices or at training centres) is workwear or undress.

General guidance and variations

- 4.5 The following general guidance and variations on the wearing of uniform apply to all operational staff:
- Relevant rank markings are to be worn by personnel at all times.
 - Caps or bonnets will be worn at the discretion of the officer in charge for specific events.
 - Events where caps/bonnets may be worn include formal outdoor public events such as parades, or when undertaking guard of honour.
 - A white or blue shirt worn as part of undress uniform must 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.

Personal appearance and professionalism

- 4.6 The wearing of uniform and personal appearance is important, it reflects the corporate identity and demonstrates a professional image. The following applies:
- Blue workwear shirts will be worn with a red t-shirt underneath.
 - In hot weather conditions and/or staff experiencing the menopause/hot flushes, and with the approval of the officer in charge, t-shirts may be removed from underneath shirts.
 - There may be occasions when wearing a t-shirt on its own may be more practical. With approval of the officer in charge, t-shirts may be worn without shirts when undertaking training, responding to operational incidents, participating in charity car washes and other

physical tasks. The projection of a professional corporate image is important and the shirt should be worn once the activity has ended.

- All uniform is to be worn appropriately with the shirt and t-shirt tucked neatly into the trousers or skirt waistband (with the exemption of maternity wear).
- Specialist alternative clothing and footwear, for example Hiax/Magnum boots, **must not** be worn as part of the daily workwear (unless authorised by occupational health). Specialist clothing must only be worn when undertaking the task that it is intended for; once the task is complete, standard workwear will be worn.
- Sweatshirts and jackets may be worn to provide additional warmth.
- Uniform will be ironed with footwear cleaned and polished.

4.7 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 is to be worn unless otherwise specified by the officer conducting/organising the interview.
- When attending court representing the Brigade – undress uniform is to be worn.
- When required to carry out official business during an off duty period (e.g. to attend a special occasion or event when representing the Brigade) – either workwear or undress uniform will be worn as appropriate to the event or as specified by event organiser.
- An individual travelling on duty between Brigade premises or to other locations would normally wear workwear or undress uniform, as appropriate, but will not wear PPE. Staff may choose to wear their own non uniform clothing (e.g. jumper/jacket etc) over their workwear uniform when using public transport networks. Staff should always remain mindful of their surroundings to protect their personal safety.

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 rank/specific role or as instructed by the incident commander or 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.

Rank markings

- 6.2 Rank markings must be clearly visible at all times. They may only be worn on:
- Undress uniform
 - Shirts
 - Sweatshirts
 - Workwear jacket
 - PPE

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:
- 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.
 - 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 guidance refer to Policy number 963 - Wearing of medals, decorations on undress uniform and ceremonial guidance for uniformed officers.

7 Wearing of uniform when off duty

- 7.1 Operational staff will **not** wear any item of PPE whilst off duty unless approved by an officer no lower than a group commander.
- 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 4.7.
- 7.3 A trainee firefighter undergoing instruction in a training centre is not to wear their uniform when off duty other than when given specific permission to do so by the training centre manager.

8 Personal appearance and personal hygiene

- 8.1 Operational staff should be mindful of the fact that health and safety, equality 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

- 8.2 Operational staff wishing to shower should be allowed such time as is reasonable. Staff are not to shower unless they have been placed 'off the run' by the officer in charge. Staff will not shower 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 poses 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 concerns regarding health and safety aspects of a particular hairstyle, this must be addressed in liaison with the Health and Safety department.
- 8.5 Employees 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 Guidance on hair is available in Appendix 2. Additional guidance is also contained in Policy number 476 – RPE – BA – Dräger PSS7000 – technical information and Policy number 956 - Respiratory protective equipment – respirator – technical information.

Make-up (cosmetic and prescribed)

- 8.7 Operational staff may, where appropriate, wear some items of make-up. However any make-up that could come into direct contact with the face mask seal of a respirator or breathing apparatus set or otherwise pose a health and safety risk e.g. facial cosmetic make-up such as foundation is prohibited. Care must be taken when putting on the face mask as any contact with make-up may degrade the rubber seal and pose a health and safety risk.

Wearing jewellery and adornment at work

- 8.8 Whilst the Brigade recognises the employee's right to have their body pierced, certain piercings may present a hazard in the workplace. Subject to 8.1, and where the officer in charge 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 the Brigade 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, Occupational Health Services, General Counsel and People Services. Any item of jewellery must remain inside the individual's protective equipment at all times where appropriate and be taped. Staff who are solely office based will not be required to tape rings/conceal jewellery when in the office. However where office staff are attending training, or an incident, any item of jewellery must be inside their PPE and 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 some time. It is therefore necessary for employees to make sure that a 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 adornment, 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

Standard firefighting uniform

- Fire helmet
- Fire hood
- Fire coat with ancillary equipment: whistle (with strap), Emergency Action Code (EAC) card, personal line (trainee firefighter to stn officer) and resuscitation pack
- Fire boots
- Fire 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 donned prior to the fire coat and worn in accordance with the personal issue fire hood guidance note. The only clothing to be worn underneath the firefighting coat and trousers is to be standard-issue uniform.

Undress uniform

- Shirt and epaulettes
- Tie
- Jacket, undress
- Skirt, undress
- Trousers, undress
- Socks or black tights 10–60 denier
- Shoes
- Cap or bonnet with badge

For guidance regarding undress uniform refer to Policy number 963 - Wearing of medals, decorations on undress uniform and ceremonial guidance for uniformed officers.

Workwear uniform

Trainee firefighter to sub officer

- Blue jacket with embroidered badge and LFB logo
- Blue shirt, embroidered badge and LFB logo
- Appropriate epaulette rank markings to be worn with jackets, sweatshirt or shirt
- Blue trousers, with LFB logo on tax tab
- Red t-shirt, with LFB logo
- Blue sweatshirt, embroidered badge and LFB logo
- Socks
- Shoes

Station officer and above

- Black jacket with embroidered badge and LFB logo
- White shirt, embroidered badge and LFB logo
- Epaulette rank markings to be worn with jackets, sweatshirt or shirt
- Black trousers, LFB logo on tax tab
- White t-shirt, with LFB logo

- Blue sweatshirt, embroidered badge and LFB logo
- Socks
- Shoes

Fitness training

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

Clothing worn for fitness training should not be printed with offensive wording or images. Gym clothing should support you while keeping you comfortable and cool. Tops and bottoms must be worn together and footwear should be appropriate for the activity being undertaken.

Staff may be eligible for some discounts with certain retailers. The Blue Light Card offers a range of online savings with hundreds of retailers including sportswear providers.

If fitness training is interrupted by an incident, workwear is to be worn before rigging in PPE.

On completion of a fitness training session staff should ensure that they are correctly rigged when attending operational incidents and completing normal station activities.

Appendix 2 - Hair length and style

Health and safety

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. 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 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.

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.

Facial hair

For employees' own safety, staff must ensure that all areas of the face that may come into contact with the BA face mask double reflex seal is kept free of hair (clean shaven) to ensure that the BA face mask seals adequately to the face.

The following applies to all operational staff, including those in specialist departments, and those on light duties: Beards and goatees (no matter how small) are not permitted. Moustaches are permitted, provided that they do not protrude beyond a projected line, drawn horizontally and vertically from the corner of the mouth. Sideburns must not extend below the intertragic notch, the bottom part of the exterior ear opening, and shall be of even width from top to bottom.

Document history

Assessments

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

EIA	28/01/2020	SDIA	27/01/2020	HSWIA	29/01/2020	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
Throughout	Changes made to reflect the change in organisational terminology following Role to Rank	15/10/2019
Page 2, para 2.2	Procurement Department updated to Technical and Commercial Services Department. Head of Procurement updated to Assistant Director, Technical and Commercial Services.	01/05/2020
Throughout	Major changes made throughout, please re-read to familiarise yourself with the updates.	01/05/2020
Page 6, para 8.6	References to extra guidance updated.	01/06/2020
Appendix 2	Appendix 2 removed, stand alone policy has been created PN963.	01/07/2020

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