

## EMPLOYEE UNIFORMS

- 1. REASON FOR ISSUE:** This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Handbook provides procedures for furnishing and servicing employee uniforms.
- 2. SUMMARY OF MAJOR CHANGES:** The Handbook designates employees who are required to wear a uniform, describes the major articles that make up the uniform and denotes whether uniforms are to be provided by issue or by an allowance paid to the employee. It documents the revision of the employee uniform policy, which now eliminates the police officer uniform. *NOTE: The prescribed uniform for police officers and the logistics for acquiring uniforms for police officers are addressed in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Handbook 0730.*
- 3. RELATED ISSUES:** None.
- 4. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY:** The Chief Facilities Management Officer (18) is responsible for the content of this Handbook. Questions concerning this Handbook may be directed to the Director, Environmental Programs Service (181C) at (202) 565-8525.
- 5. RESCISSIONS:** M-1, Part VII, Chapter 8, dated March 14, 1994, is rescinded.
- 6. RECERTIFICATION:** This document is scheduled for recertification on or before the last working day of November 2007.

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Under Secretary for Health

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## EMPLOYEE UNIFORMS

### 1. PURPOSE

This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Handbook provides procedures for furnishing and servicing employee uniforms. It designates employees who are required to wear a uniform, describes the major articles that make up the uniform and denotes whether uniforms are to be provided by issue or by an allowance paid to the employee.

### 2. SCOPE

a. This Handbook contains the mandatory requirements for furnishing and servicing employee uniforms, and:

(1) Designates employees who are required to wear a uniform.

(2) Describes the major articles that make up the uniform.

(3) Denotes whether uniforms are to be provided by issue or by an allowance paid to the employee.

b. Uniforms for all employees, except Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) police officers, are authorized in accordance with Title 5 United States Code (U.S.C.) 5901-5903, and as interpreted and implemented by the Office of Personnel Management. Uniforms and uniform allowances for VA police officers are authorized by 38 U.S.C. 218 (c), Public Law 98-528. VA Handbook 0730 addresses the uniform requirements and logistics for VA police.

c. VA medical center Directors determine the style and color of uniforms to be worn by appropriate Services who are designated to receive "issue" uniforms. **NOTE:** *Local management needs to meet its labor relation's responsibilities when implementing this Handbook.*

### 3. DEFINITIONS

a. "Employee" includes full-time and part-time employees of VA, but excludes volunteers, trainees, and workers who receive a stipend or salary from a source other than VA-appropriated funds, and other workers in similar categories.

b. "Uniform" refers to distinct articles of clothing described in Appendix A.

c. "Special purpose (protective) clothing" are items furnished as a safeguard against exposure to inclement weather and/or possible injury or cross infection.

(1) Protective items include all items purchased for use as protection against infection, contamination or injury to a person, or damage to the normal apparel worn by the person. This includes: coveralls, shoes, gloves, goggles, rubber aprons, isolation gowns, masks, parkas, etc.

(2) This type of clothing is purchased from operating funds and processed through the textile care processing facility in lots much like hospital linen.

(3) Items of protective clothing are not considered issue or allowance uniforms.

#### **4. UNIFORM SELECTION**

a. Type of material and style of uniforms selected for issue must be based on textile care processing costs, appearance, and suitability of the garment to the environment where it will be worn.

b. Employees who are provided an allowance to purchase their own uniforms are expected to select clothing as:

(1) Designated in Appendix A, and

(2) Appropriate to the propriety of a medical setting.

c. Employees must dress according to standards set by their professional or occupational association.

d. The wearing of badges, patches, uniforms, or equipment other than those prescribed is prohibited.

#### **5. PROCUREMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

a. Employees who are paid a uniform allowance must provide themselves with all articles comprising the uniform except as authorized in Appendix A.

b. Uniforms must be procured in the usual and customary manner that all supplies are procured. The Standard Color Reference of America number is to be utilized on all procurement documents.

c. Issued uniforms remain VA property after they have been issued; and as such, they must be turned in by employees who no longer require them for official duty. Employees are required to reimburse VA for loss or damage to uniforms when the loss or damage is due to employee negligence.

d. VA Form 10-1148, Employees Uniform and Property Issue Card, must be used to account for issue uniforms.

e. VA medical center Directors must establish local uniform policy regarding the style and color of uniforms to be issued.

#### **6. WEARING REQUIREMENTS**

a. Employees are required to wear the standard uniform described in Appendix A while on duty, except for deviations and exceptions contained in Paragraph 6. Standard uniforms are

listed first in order in Appendix A. All other listings are considered options. Medical center employees having frequent contact with patients in wards or treatment areas must wear a uniform.

b. Individuals serving VA in a “without compensation” status, or under one of the Federally-sponsored programs, and patients and members assigned duties in a therapeutic program are to be issued the same type uniform as that worn by VA employees who perform similar duties.

c. The medical center Director may authorize employees to wear uniforms to and from work.

## 7. DEVIATIONS AND EXCEPTIONS

a. The medical center Director is authorized to:

(1) Determine when wearing a uniform is not consistent with the duties of the position, and to prescribe when the uniform is not required. In no case will an employee who does not wear a uniform while on duty be paid a uniform allowance.

(2) Select the method, issue or allowance, to provide uniforms for rotating interns and residents whichever is the most economical.

(3) Approve or disapprove deviation requests concerning the style and color of uniforms for employees who receive issued uniforms.

b. The medical center Director may:

(1) Authorize employees to wear personal clothing while on duty when, in the opinion of the professional staff, a benefit to patients may result. Affected employees are not be entitled to issue uniforms, uniform allowance, or laundry service at VA expense during periods when personal clothing is worn. **NOTE:** *Once the deviation is approved, the method of pay adjustment is to be performed manually for the designated employee.*

(2) Permit employees eligible for issue uniforms to wear personally-owned uniforms while on duty, provided personal uniforms are equal in quality, are the same color and of similar design as the standard issue uniform. **NOTE:** *This may also include personally-owned culotte-type outfits for female employees who meet quality and color requirements of the standard uniform.*

c. When a position title changes without a significant change in duties or position requirements, employees assigned in the position will continue to wear the same style of uniform.

d. Request for waivers to the uniform policy; i.e., conversion of employees from uniform issue to allowance, must be approved by the Director, Environmental Programs Service, VA Central Office. A request for a waiver is to be forwarded through the appropriate Veterans Integrated Service Network Director. Each request for a waiver must include a complete justification, cost analyses, and recommended allowance rates not-to-exceed authorized limits. **NOTE:** *Should a waiver be approved the method of pay adjustment will be performed manually at each VA medical center for each designated employee.*

## 8. IDENTIFICATION INSIGNIA

a. A shoulder patch, button or other insignia to indicate membership in, or certification by, an approved professional or occupational organization may be worn. The cost of such insignia is borne by the employee.

b. Employees whose duties routinely bring them into contact with patients must wear an easily read identification badge showing names and position titles. Identification badges are furnished at VA expense.

## 9. ALTERATION, REPAIR, AND REPLACEMENT

a. Government-issue uniforms may be altered and repaired at VA expense.

b. Personally-owned uniforms will not be altered or repaired at VA expense. *NOTE: An exception may be made for a garment damaged while performing official duties.*

## 10. TEXTILE CARE PROCESSING FACILITY SERVICES

a. Uniforms prescribed in Appendix A and worn by an employee while performing official duty may be processed by a VA laundry facility, providing the service is available.

b. The maximum weekly quantity of uniforms that may be processed for each employee is established and approved by the Chief, Environmental Management Service. Except for unusual circumstances, this is limited to one clean uniform for each duty day.

## 11. UNIFORM ALLOWANCE

a. When authorized in Appendix A and prescribed uniforms are worn, an allowance must be paid to specific groups of employees for the purpose of offsetting the cost for uniforms. *NOTE: The rates payable are specified in Appendix B.*

b. Payment for the first year of uniformed service is made by direct payment to an employee on entering duty in a job subject to the uniform requirements, or whose job is made subject to uniform requirements. The first year payment is included in the first salary payment to the employee. If an employee is paid the initial allowance, then subsequently separated and re-employed in the same position within 1 year, a second initial allowance is not authorized. *NOTE: No initial allowance can be authorized if separation occurs before the first pay -period.*

c. Payment for subsequent years of uniformed service is made as a biweekly pay period allowance. The pay period allowance is effective at the beginning of the first pay period following completion of the first year of service.

d. An employee who transfers between positions with different uniform requirements is entitled to receive payment for the first and subsequent years of uniformed service as outlined in subparagraphs 10b and 10c.

e. A change in style or color of the prescribed uniform does not entitle employees to the first year payment of the employee uniform allowance. Affected employees are permitted to continue wearing obsolete uniforms until replaced through normal wear.

f. The initial allowance payable to a part-time or intermittent employee, who is otherwise eligible for a uniform allowance, is based on the maximum number of duty hours authorized by the appointment document. The biweekly allowance is based on the employee's established tour and any additional hours worked not in excess of 40 hours in a week.

g. The amount payable to a full-time employee who serves only part-time where a uniform is required is determined by adjusting the annual allowance to conform to the limited period uniforms are worn.

h. Employees appointed for periods of less than 1 year, or substitute employees, are to be provided uniforms by issue in lieu of being paid a uniform allowance.

i. The first year payment is not authorized for an employee who transfers between positions subject to the same uniform requirements.

j. In no case will an employee who does not regularly wear a uniform while on duty be paid a uniform allowance.

k. The biweekly allowance will not be reduced for periods of leave with pay, unless it is known that the employee will not return to duty at the expiration of such leave. In such cases, the allowance is to be discontinued, as of the date it becomes known that no return to duty will occur. No reduction for leave without pay is made unless the period of leave without pay covers a complete pay period.

l. Any employee receiving a uniform allowance who resigns less than 1 year after receiving the initial uniform allowance must repay to VA a pro rata share of the amount paid based on the number of months remaining in the 12-month period following the initial payment. **NOTE:** *Repayment liability may be waived by local management in situations, which are beyond a employee's control (e.g., reassignment for failure to meet physical standards or in lieu of disability retirement).*

m. Any employee entitled to and receiving a uniform allowance must receive payment of the initial or one-time uniform allowance. **NOTE:** *The method of pay adjustment is to be performed manually for the designated employee.*

## 12. UNIFORM ISSUE

a. The number of uniforms issued to each employee must be the minimum required ensuring that a clean uniform is available each day. Five uniforms per employee are normally adequate. Where the even exchange system is used, three uniforms per employee are normally adequate.

b. At medical centers using the bundle system, issues in excess of five uniforms per employee may be justified when frequent laundry service is not available. In no instance will the total cost of all uniforms issued to an individual employee exceed \$400.00 during any one calendar year.

- c. Issue uniforms are to be replaced, when rendered unserviceable, on an item-for-item basis.
- d. Uniforms purchased by VA are not to be furnished to employees who receive a uniform allowance.
- e. Records of the cost of uniforms purchased for issue must be kept separate from the cost of linen and protective clothing.

**UNIFORMS PRESCRIBED FOR WEAR BY VHA EMPLOYEES**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Type Uniform</b>	<b>Provided By</b>
<p>All Supply, Processing and Distribution (SPD) and Warehouse, including first-line supervisors</p> <p>Female or Male</p>	<p><b>ACQUISITION and MATERIEL MANAGEMENT</b></p> <p>To be determined by the Department of veterans Affairs (VA) medical center director</p>	<p>Issue</p>
<p>Dentist (Full- or part-time, including consultant, attending and resident)</p> <p>Female or Male</p>	<p><b>DENTAL</b></p> <p>To be determined by VA medical center director</p>	<p>Issue</p>
<p>For Clinical Wear</p>	<p>To be determined by VA medical center director</p>	<p>Issue</p>
<p>Hygienist, Expanded Function Dental Auxiliary (EFDA) and Assistant</p> <p>Female</p>	<p>Pants, Tailored, White or Pastel, and Tunic, White or Pastel, or Dress, White or Pastel</p>	<p>Allowance</p>
<p>Male</p>	<p>Shirt, Sport, White or Pastel, and Trousers, White or Pastel</p>	<p>Allowance</p>
<p>Laboratory Technician</p> <p>Female or Male</p>	<p>To be determined by VA medical center director</p>	<p>Issue</p>

**UNIFORMS PRESCRIBED FOR WEAR BY VHA EMPLOYEES**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Type Uniform</b>	<b>Provided By</b>
<p>All Trades, Crafts and Service Plant Operators, Motor Vehicle Operators, first-line supervisors and grounds maintenance.</p> <p>Female or Male</p> <p>Fire Chief, Fire Fighters, Fire Prevention Inspectors</p> <p>Female</p> <p>Male</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ENGINEERING</b></p> <p>To be determined by VA medical center director</p> <p>Same as Male except Pants, Blue, or Skirt, Blue</p> <p>Cap, Visor, Bell Type Crown; Blue Coat, Short; Blue Trousers; Blue Shirt, Long or Short Sleeves; Blue Tie, Black Optional</p> <p>Insignia Cap, Badge VA Legend and Issue Seal</p>	<p>Issue</p> <p>Allowance</p> <p>Allowance</p> <p>Issue</p>
<p>General Foreman, first line supervisors, housekeeping aids, glazing maintenance, grounds maintenance, painters, pest control applicators, textile care employees, trades and other crafts.</p> <p>Female or Male</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT</b></p> <p>To be determined by VA medical center director</p>	<p>Issue</p>

**UNIFORMS PRESCRIBED FOR WEAR BY VHA EMPLOYEES**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Type Uniform</b>	<b>Provided By</b>
<p>Medical Illustrators, Photographers</p> <p>Female or Male</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MEDICAL MEDIA</b></p> <p>To be determined by VA medical center director</p>	<p>Issue</p>
<p>Technicians</p> <p>Female or Male</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>NUCLEAR MEDICINE</b></p> <p>To be determined by VA medical center director</p>	<p>Issue</p>
<p>Chief and Assistant Chief</p> <p>Female or Male</p> <p>Supervisory and Staff Nurses, Nurse Anesthetists, Infection Control Nurses and Nurse Practitioners</p> <p>Female or Male</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>NURSING</b></p> <p>To be determined by VA medical center director</p>	<p>Issue</p>
<p>Nursing Technicians, Practical and/or Vocational Nurse</p> <p>Female or Male</p>	<p>To be determined by VA medical center director</p>	<p>Allowance</p>
<p>Nursing Assistants and/or Technicians</p> <p>Female or Male</p>	<p>To be determined by VA medical center director</p>	<p>Issue</p>

**UNIFORMS PRESCRIBED FOR WEAR BY VHA EMPLOYEES**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Type Uniform</b>	<b>Provided By</b>
<p>Dietitians, all food service workers, cooks, supervisors, interns, technicians</p> <p>Female or Male</p> <p>Chief, Food Production</p> <p>Female</p> <p>Male</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>NUTRITION AND FOOD</b></p> <p>To be determined by VA medical center director</p> <p>Blouse, white, skirt, A-line, black pants, black short coat, white (for kitchen wear only), black string tie</p> <p>Shirt, white, pants, black, short coat, white (for kitchen wear only) tie, black choke proof</p>	<p>Issue</p> <p>Allowance</p> <p>Allowance</p>
<p>Technicians, Technologists, Helpers, Aids, Assistants, and doctoral-level employees</p> <p>Female or Male</p> <p>Chief, Pharmacy and other pharmacists, pharmacy aids and technicians, including first line supervisors and pharmacy students</p> <p>Female or Male</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PATHOLOGY AND LABORATORY MEDICINE</b></p> <p>To be determined by VA medical center director</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>PHARMACY</b></p> <p>To be determined by VA medical center director</p>	<p>Issue</p> <p>Issue</p>

**UNIFORMS PRESCRIBED FOR WEAR BY VHA EMPLOYEES**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Type Uniform</b>	<b>Provided By</b>
All Specialists, Aids and First Line Supervisors	<b>PHYSICAL MEDICINE AND REHABILITATION</b>	
Female or Male	To be determined by VA medical center director	Issue
Prosthetic representatives, technicians, technologists (Orthotic prosthetic restoration)	<b>PROSTHETIC AND SENSORY AIDS</b>	
Female or Male	To be determined by VA medical center director	Issue
Social Worker	<b>SOCIAL WORK SERVICE</b>	
Female or Male	To be determined by VA medical center director	Issue
Audiologists and Speech Pathologists (Doctoral level or full-time staff) Audiology and Speech Pathology Trainees Optometrists Clinical Psychologists Podiatrists Physician's Assistant	<b>ALL OTHER CLINICAL</b>	

**UNIFORMS PRESCRIBED FOR WEAR BY VHA EMPLOYEES**

Residents and Interns (Other than career)		
<b>Position</b>	<b>Type Uniform</b>	<b>Provided By</b>
<p>Physicians and Scientists, M.D. Level (Full- or part-time including attendings, consultants and career residents)          Anesthetists          All other technologists, technicians and therapists</p> <p>Female or Male</p>	<p>To be determined by VA medical center director</p>	<p>Issue</p>

UNIFORM ALLOWANCE RATES

Employee	Initial Allowance	Per Annum Allowance	Pay Period Rates	Hourly Rates
Chief, Food Production, Foreman, or Leader	400.00	204.00	7.82	0.0977
Dental Assistant, Hygienist and Expanded Function Dental Auxiliary (EFDA)	400.00	211.00	8.11	0.1014
Fire Chief, Fire Fighter and Fire Prevention Inspector	400.00	220.00	8.43	0.1054
Nurse, Supervisory and Staff	400.00	215.00	8.27	0.1034
Nurse, Practical or Vocational	400.00	215.00	8.24	0.1030
Nurse Practitioner, Infection Control, Anesthetists	400.00	215.00	8.27	0.1034
Nursing Technicians	400.00	215.00	8.24	0.1030
Physician Resident, if approved	400.00	215.00	8.24	0.1030