



Columbia Fire Department Standard Operating Guideline ADM-028 Uniform and Personal Appearance

Effective: 5/5/08

Issued by Wm. Bradley Anderson, Chief of Department

Rescinds: ADM-028, Personal Grooming and Appearance (9/1/03), and Uniform and Personal Appearance (7/7/06)

Purpose:

Establish a guideline for a standard uniform and to set forth responsibilities governing the use and wear of these uniforms. It will outline the personal appearance and grooming standards set forth by the Columbia Fire Department. Personnel are to use this guideline to determine the proper way to present their uniform and personal appearance.

Scope:

This guideline applies to all uniformed personnel

Guideline:

The Columbia Fire Department has maintained the highest quality of fire protection to the citizens it serves through education, training and suppression. Columbia Fire is a highly visible department in the community.

In order to project an image of professionalism and uniformity, the department has developed a method of keeping personnel to this high standard. The department will issue uniforms to those specific employees who deal with the public on a daily basis. To ensure that all employees who receive uniforms are knowledgeable of the types of uniforms issued and the regulations governing their use, the following guideline is established.

Columbia Fire Department shall maintain a professional appearance and that issued equipment shall be maintained in good condition. All members of the Department must abide by the Standard Operating Guideline ADM-028 regarding uniform and appearance.

I. Uniform Standards – General

A. Uniforms are a means of readily identifying the fire element in our society. Uniforms allow the public to clearly establish that they are dealing with an official representative of the Columbia Fire Department. In many situations, the uniform may be a safety factor for the public and the firefighter. In addition, uniformed elements play a role in crime prevention because of their visible presence. Specific components of the Columbia Fire Department have been identified as uniformed elements as their mission is best performed in a high profile manner. Personnel assigned to uniformed components are required to wear the approved uniform as described in this guideline.

B. Items issued for use as part of the official fire service uniform shall meet the specifications set forth by the Department in all respects. Unauthorized equipment, alterations or additions to the official uniform will not be allowed. A violation to this guideline shall bring disciplinary action as directed by any supervisor. Any employee

wishing to seek exceptions to the standard uniform guideline must request approval in writing through the chain of command. Approvals will be issued in writing.

C. Columbia Fire Department personnel will maintain a high standard of dress and appearance. Uniforms will be fitted, pressed, clean, serviceable, and properly fastened. Metallic devices and leather will be properly polished. Supervisory personnel shall inspect the daily uniform during roll call. PPE inspections will be done on Fridays. Regardless of the uniform for the day, Class A, B, C and D uniforms must be readily accessible by all individuals at all times while on duty.

D. The Chief of the Department will be the final authority. Any approvals from his office or exceptions shall be inserted into this guideline for future reference.

II. Standard Uniforms Regulations

A. The prescribed uniform will be worn between 0745 and 1800 with the following exceptions:

1. While participating in physical fitness training.
2. During practical training sessions.
3. Class B or Class C uniform shirt are optional if in full PPE to include overhaul, staging and Rehab periods of an emergency operation.
4. Unless otherwise directed by the Battalion Chief or Command Staff

B. No part or article of any department uniform shall be worn by any member, except while on duty or while participating in an approved Columbia Fire Department function. A member has the option of wearing a complete uniform to and from work. If a Class B or C uniform shirt is worn the uniform must be complete. Off duty limitations consist of one hour prior to work and one hour after being relieved.

C. All department personnel will wear the appropriate Class B or Class C regulation uniform while attending or participating in any classroom training or classroom testing activity when representing the Columbia Fire Department while on duty. Class D uniform will be permitted during hands-on training exercises.

D. Shirts will be worn tucked in at **all** times. Top button may be left open if a tie is not required.

E. The regulation uniform dress shirts will be worn to events as specified in Section VI. B, as stated below. Personnel may use personal discretion when wearing either short or long sleeve Class B and C shirts when not attending one of the mentioned events.

1. March 15 thru November 15- the short sleeve Class B and Class C uniform shirts shall be worn.
2. November 16 through March14- the long sleeve Class B and Class C uniform shirts shall be worn.
3. The Division Chief or the Assistant Chief of Operations has the discretion to make any changes (Section II. E. 1 & 2) based on current weather conditions. All affected personnel will be advised of the change immediately via email or through Columbia Central.

F. During times of shift change, the employee waiting to be relieved must respond to calls with a minimum of bunker pants and Class D approved shirt.

G. Personnel must be in possession of a City ID Card at all times.

H. Lapel brass will be issued by the Department and worn on the Class A coat and Class B shirt only. Only those wearing a Class B uniform are permitted to wear issued collar brass. No other form of collar brass is acceptable.

I. All metal is to remain shined and serviceable. All leather apparel will remain clean and polished.

J. The use of cell phone headsets, earpieces, microphones and music players is not permitted between 0745-2100. After 2100, the use of these items is permitted at the station only. These items will not be used on the apparatus or away from the station. When portable music players are permitted for use, they will be played at an acceptable volume that is not disturbing to others. The volume will also permit monitoring of calls.

K. Sunglasses are not to be worn inside the station or other buildings. Exceptions are:
1. Tinted safety glasses during calls that require eye protection.
2. Prescribed by a physician or optometrist

III. Standard Uniforms and Equipment

A. Upon employment with the City each employee shall be issued the following uniforms and equipment listed herein. As replacement equipment is needed, it will be issued through the Logistics Bureau. Employees will be required to turn in old items in order to receive new items. Should items be lost or destroyed, a lost or destroyed report shall be filled out and turned in to Logistics.

B. The following is a list of items to be issued to all personnel:

1. Four pair blue utility work trousers (Class C)
2. Eight Class C Shirts (4 Short Sleeve, 4 Long Sleeve)
3. Four blue T-shirts (Class D)
4. Two blue long sleeve T-shirts (Class D)
5. One pair black leather safety shoes/ boots with steel toe
6. One winter coat
7. One Ball cap
8. One Badge (Dress shirt)
9. One set of collar brass emblems for Class B uniform (Captains and above, Administration, and Prevention only)
10. One nametag

11. One short sleeve dress shirt Class B

12. One Class A uniform complete with:

- a. One dress cap w/ rank insignia band
- b. One dress cap badge
- c. One dress coat
- d. One badge (Dress Coat)
- e. One set of lapel brass emblems for Class A coat (Captains and above)
- f. One long sleeve dress shirt
- g. One pair of black dress trousers (Optional skirt for female employees)
- h. One pair black patent leather shoes

13. One complete set of structural fire fighting turnouts for suppression personnel: See ADM-032 Structural Firefighting PPE & Eye Protection

C. Required items not furnished by Columbia Fire Department:

1. Black belt (see section IV. C. 9. and VI. E. 6.)
2. Black tie (see section IV. C. 7.)
3. Undergarments (i.e. underwear, socks, white t-shirts)

IV. Fire Uniform Class A

A. Class A shall be worn for functions listed, but not limited to:

1. Appropriate formal ceremonies i.e.; funerals, parades, graduations, or other appropriate functions.
2. For LODD ceremonies and events, the full Class A uniform is **required**, unless the Chief of the Department or designee gives expressed permission. (See Formal Class B exception for personnel without Class A uniforms.)
3. Any other occasion deemed appropriate by the Chief.

B. The Class A uniform is a formal uniform and is to be worn in the utmost professional manner. The highest regard for care should be taken at all times. It shall be clean, pressed, and free of defects.

C. Specifications:

1. Dress cap with badge and rank band:
 - a. Shall be worn in a military manner, square and level on the head.
 - b. Plastic cap covers may be used during inclement weather.
 - c. Shall be clean and in good condition.
 - d. Shall be worn at all times outside and removed when entering vehicles and buildings.

- e. Only the most recent service pin may be worn on dress cap. It will be centered over right eye.
2. Dress coat with badge:
 - a. Dress coat is to remain buttoned except while seated.
 - b. Badge to be worn on coat
 - c. Cloth rank bands shall be worn in accordance to ADM-026
3. In time of mourning, a black band may cover the center insignia of badge. Length of time will be determined by the Chief.
4. Service ribbons shall be worn in accordance with ADM-026, Service Awards.
5. Only a long sleeve dress shirt will be worn in Class A uniform:
 - a. A white under shirt must be worn under the uniform dress shirt; no other color shirt may be worn. Exception: See thermal undershirts below.
 - b. Sleeves are not to be turned up or under.
 - c. The shirt shall be pressed and free of defects.
 - d. A black tie (black bow tie for female employees) must be worn in Class A Uniform
6. Nameplate will be worn on the right side in line with the top of the breast pocket so that the bottom of nameplate is flush with top of pocket and centered.
7. Black tie:
 - a. Shall be plain with no designs or patterns
 - b. Shall be a dull or matte finish
 - c. Tie clasp optional (Most recent City service pin is an option)
8. Black dress trousers or black skirt for female employees.
9. Black dress belt must be worn with regulation uniform. Belt buckle shall not be distracting to the uniform. Belt width should be 1 inch to 1½ inches with Class A.
10. Black Patent Leather dress shoes.
11. Black Socks (black pantyhose without design for female employees).
12. Thermal undershirts may be worn during cold and inclement weather under the following conditions:
 - a. Must be white in color for Class A dress uniform.
 - b. Must be worn so that the lower garment's sleeves do not protrude from under the dress shirt's cuff.
 - c. Turtlenecks or mock-turtlenecks are **not** permitted while in Class A dress uniform. With the exception of the Honor Guard.

V. Fire Uniform Class B

- A. The Class B uniform shall be the daily uniform for the following employees:
 - 1. Administration
 - 2. Fire Prevention
 - 3. Fire Suppression Chiefs (Exception will be on weekends and Holidays).
- B. The Class B uniform shall be worn in the utmost professional manner. For personnel without Class A uniforms, the Class B shall be worn in lieu there of.
- C. Personnel may be required to wear a Class B uniform during special functions deemed necessary by the Chief. (i.e. grievance hearings, assessment boards, etc.).
- D. Specifications for Class B formal
 - 1. Dress shirt
 - a. (Section II. E.)
 - b. Battalion Chiefs and Command Staff will be permitted to wear a long sleeve shirt without a tie at times when approved by the Chief.
 - c. A white under t-shirt must be worn under the uniform dress shirt; no other color shirt may be worn. Exception: See thermal undershirts below.
 - d. Sleeves are not to be turned up or under.
 - e. It shall be pressed and free of defects.
 - f. A black tie (black bow tie for female employees) must be worn in Class B formal uniform
 - 2. Nameplate will be worn centered over the right pocket with the bottom of the nameplate flush with the top of the pocket.
 - 3. Service ribbons shall be worn in accordance with ADM-026, Service Awards.
 - 4. Black tie (see Section IV. C. 7.)
 - 5. Black dress trousers (*or* Black skirt for Female employees)
 - a. Class C uniform pants are not permitted while wearing a Class B.
 - 6. Black dress belt (see section IV. C. 9.)
 - 7. Black socks (*or* pantyhose for Female employees) without design.
 - 8. Black patent leather dress shoes. Exception: During inclement weather it is at the Battalion Chiefs discretion to wear black leather work boots. (section III. A. 5.)
 - 9. Black vest sweaters
 - a. (Section XIII. G.)

VI. Fire Uniform Class C

- A. The Class C uniform shall be the daily uniform worn by the following personnel:

1. Suppression personnel (up to and including Captains)
2. Training Bureau
3. Logistics and Support Staff
4. Suppression Chiefs will have the option (after 1800 hrs, and on weekends and Holidays)

B. The Class C uniform will be used for all duties performed by suppression personnel. Because this is used as an everyday all-purpose uniform, personnel are reminded to keep this uniform clean and free of major defects. Some duties include, but are not limited to:

1. Pre-incident surveys
2. Station tours
3. Fire Education Presentations
4. Inter-departmental training
5. Training at outside agencies
6. Departmental meetings

C. **No** additional pins or emblems will be permitted on the Class C shirts. i.e. collar brass, badges, nametags, blood donor pins, etc.

D. During times of extreme heat, the Assistant Chief of Operations or Division Chief shall consider personnel safety and dress personnel down to a Class D uniform. This will be communicated via radio or email to the entire shift.

E. Specifications:

1. Blue utility shirt
 - a. (Section II. E.)
 - b. Ties are **not** to be worn in a Class C uniform
 - c. Only one pen will be kept in shirt pocket
 - d. Pocket flaps will be kept closed
2. Blue t-shirt
 - a. May be worn underneath blue utility shirt. Sleeves will not be visible under the utility shirt.
 - b. Stations may make modifications to the t-shirt with the Chief's approval.
 - i. Will be furnished by employee, and must meet department specifications)
 - ii. Specifications are available through Logistics
 - c. Blue long sleeve or mock turtleneck may be substituted for the standard T-shirt underneath the long sleeve utility shirt.
 - d. White under shirts not to be visible under Class C Utility shirt
3. Blue utility trousers
 - a. Trousers are **not** to be worn bloused
 - b. Blousing strings are to be removed
 - c. No large items are to be stored in the pockets that would cause bulging (i.e.

cigarette, drink bottles, hats, and gloves)

4. Black leather safety shoes/ boots with steel toe
5. Black socks must be worn with the regulation uniform. *Exception:* When an 8" or greater work boot is worn.
6. Black belt must be worn with regulation uniform. Belt buckle shall not be distracting to the uniform. Belt width should be no more than 2 ¼ inches for Class C and Class D uniforms. A black Class 1 rescue harness may be worn in place of the black leather belt on the Class C and Class D uniform.
7. Ball Cap
 - a. (Section XIII. H.)

VII. Fire Uniform Class D

A. The Class D uniform consists of the entire Class C uniform minus the blue utility shirt.

This uniform may be worn in the following situations:

1. While participating in physical fitness training.
2. During hands-on training sessions.
3. While in full PPE, to include overhaul, staging, and rehab at emergency scenes.
4. During daily truck and equipment inspections.
5. After 1800.
6. During times of extreme heat and when deemed appropriate by the Assistant Chief of Operations or the Division Chief)

B. Evening attire and/or workout clothing may be worn in lieu of Class D uniform after 2100. This may also be used for physical fitness training. If physical fitness training session is prior to 2100, personnel must return to proper Class C or Class D uniform.

1. Shorts or sweat pants.
 - a. Preferably Columbia Fire Department issue.
 - b. Blue or gray in color.
 - c. Shorts to be no longer than the knees, and at least mid thigh.
2. Fire department t-shirt.
 - a. Old gray Columbia Fire Rescue shirts
 - b. FDNY, Charlotte Fire, Combat Challenge, etc.
 - c. Shirts will **not** contain obscene pictures, or phrases, or contain any visible advertisement. They will be clean and presentable to the public.
 - d. Tank tops, sleeveless shirts, and muscle shirts are not permitted.
3. Sneakers/running shoes.

C. If leaving the station for any reason while dressed in evening attire or workout clothing personnel are to wear a minimum of approved t-shirt and bunker pants. If the bunker pants are heavily soiled, it will be the officer's discretion to use the uniform pants instead of bunker pants for medical calls.

D. Tank tops, sleeveless shirts, and muscle shirts are permitted in the weight room only

during physical fitness training only. An acceptable shirt that meets criteria (section VII.B.2.) must be worn if leaving the station or in the public's eye.

E. Approved long sleeve t-shirts, sweatshirts, job shirts, and pull-over will be permitted with Class D uniform.

VIII. Non-uniform personnel

A. All non-uniform personnel will follow the City of Columbia approved dress code.

IX. Honor Guard Uniform

A. Consists of:

1. Full Class A uniform
2. Appropriate colored ascot
3. Cap Band
4. Aiguillette (shoulder cord) worn on right shoulder
5. White one-quarter inch (1/4") ornamental braid sewn on trousers
6. White leggings (canvas)
7. Black Patent Leather shoes
8. White cloth belt
9. White gloves
10. Shall be worn only by active members of the Honor Guard, during times deemed appropriate by their membership
11. Can be altered by active Honor Guard personnel if approved by Chief.

X. Other Required Items

A. In addition to basic uniform clothing the following are required items:

1. City of Columbia ID Card - must be on person while on duty
2. Valid South Carolina Driver's License
 - a. Must be on person while on duty
 - b. Must remain valid while employed as per condition of employment with city.
3. Senior Fire Fighters must carry City issued driver card on person while on duty.

XI. Additional Personal Items

A. In addition to issued items, the following may be allowed with Class B or Class C uniforms as long they do not distract from the uniform:

1. Cell phones (No cell phone accessories, blue tooth earpieces or headphones will be worn during the hours of 07:45 to 21:00). At no time during a call will fire personnel

have any accessories on their head, with the exception of the headphones assigned to the apparatus.

2. Pager.

3. Sunglasses will not be worn inside the office, living area or inside any structure while operating on any calls.

B. In addition to issued items and items listed in section XI. A., the following may be allowed with Class C uniform as long they do not distract from the uniform:

1. Knife, Multi-tool, i.e., Gerber, Leatherman
2. Medical glove and/or shears accessory pouch

C. Purchased items may be allowed if the Safety Officer and the Operations Chief have given expressed written consent to the employee. If request is granted, notification shall be distributed to all employees. Items must meet or exceed the standards for intended use. Items include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Helmets
2. Turnout Boots
3. Flash hoods
4. Firefighting Gloves
5. Safety Glasses (ANSI Approved)
6. Specialized Rescue Equipment
7. Haz-mat apparel
8. Coveralls, over garments, etc.

XII. Alterations and unapproved apparel

A. Items purchased for use as part of the fire uniform shall meet the specifications as set forth by the Department in all respects. Unauthorized equipment, alterations or additions to the official uniform will not be allowed unless approved by the Chief of the Department in written form.

B. Non-uniform attire may be worn by on duty personnel who are authorized by the Chief or the Department to wear such items. Members of specific assignments may wear special uniforms or equipment as authorized by the Chief.

C. No other insignia is to be applied to uniform unless approved in writing by the Chief.

XIII. Uniform Accessories

A. Jacket

1. Department issued winter coats, blue in color, will be worn with Class C and Class D uniforms **only**.

2. First and last name along with rank may be embroidered on right chest. Department approved font, text size, and color must be used.
3. Jackets will be clean, free of defects, and have no wrinkles.

B. Pullovers

1. Job shirt style pullovers are acceptable with approved insignia.
2. First and last name along with rank may be embroidered on right chest. Department approved font, text size, and color must be used. (see Logistics)
3. Pullovers will be clean, free of defects, and have no wrinkles.

C. Sweatshirts

1. To be worn with Class D uniform **only**.
2. Must meet department specifications, and will not be issued by Logistics.

D. Nameplate

1. Nameplates shall meet departmental specification and shall be of matching color to badge.
2. This plate shall contain the employee's last name and at least one initial.
3. A Service accessory plate may be worn with nameplate and must be of matching color.

F. Coveralls

1. Coveralls may be worn during truck inspections if approved by the Chief.
2. Approved Nomex coveralls or jumpsuits may be used for rescue operations if approved by the Safety Officer

G. Black vest sweaters

1. Sweaters are permitted, but will not be furnished by the department. These sweaters must meet department specifications. (See Logistics for specifications) Battalion Chiefs, Administration and Prevention are permitted to wear sweaters.

H. Ball cap (Navy Blue)

The ball cap for suppression personnel, complete with approved insignia, shall be worn at functions that are appropriate.

1. The cap shall be worn in a military manner. (i.e. square level on the head)
2. The appropriate emblem shall be attached. (center front)
3. The cap shall be in good condition, not soiled, brim not frayed or buckled crown not crushed or out of shape.
4. The cap shall not be worn in the station with the exception of bay area.
5. Pins are **not** to be worn unless approved by the Chief in written form.
6. The cap is not permitted with the Class B uniform, exception: A black approved ball cap can be worn with the Class B uniform for short durations after a fire or when speaking with the media.
7. Hats must meet Department specifications. (See Logistics)

I. Stocking Cap/Toboggan (Navy Blue)

1. The cap shall be in good condition and not soiled.
2. Shall not be used while in a Class A or Class B uniform
3. Shall not be worn in the station with the exception of bay area.

4. May be worn on the bay floor.
5. Hats must meet Department specifications. (See Logistics)

XIV. Maintenance and Repair

A. Uniform maintenance

When the uniform is worn, care shall be taken that it fits well, is neat, clean, in good repair, and properly pressed.

B. Repaired uniforms

1. Uniform items with visible areas of repair, which detract from the member's appearance shall not be worn.
2. Uniforms that obviously need repair/replacement shall not be worn.
3. Battalion Chiefs shall determine the propriety of wearing garments in question

XV. Personal Grooming

A. All personnel have the responsibility of presenting themselves in a professional manner. Personal appearance is not only an important aspect of the job, but also an issue of safety. It is vital that all personnel follow the standards set forth and use sound judgment in adhering and enforcing this guideline. This not only applies to the uniform, but to employee grooming.

B. Hair

1. Men

- a. Hair should be kept clean, well groomed and maintained at all times so as to not interfere with the proper wearing of the official departmental uniform cap, protective head gear, face piece and/or any other safety equipment.
- b. The length of hair in the front shall not fall over the eyebrows and the length of hair in the back shall not fall below the top of the buttoned shirt collar when the individual is in a standing position.
- c. The hair on the rear and sides of head shall not extend more than 2 ¼ inches from scalp nor shall hair on the side of the head cover more than one-half of the ears.
- d. No length or style of hair is permitted that will in any way interfere with and/or obstruct the view of employees in the performance of their official duties.
- e. The Chief of the Department must approve hairstyles that are determined not to be appropriate by a supervisor.
- f. Hair must be of a natural color and not distracting or extreme in appearance.
- g. The back of the neck is to be clean and free of hair.

2. Women

- a. Hair must be clean and neatly arranged. It shall not interfere with the normal wearing of all standard or adopted headgear.

- b. Hair shall be of such a length and worn so it does not interfere with the efficiency or performance of duty.
- c. When in uniform the hair must not fall more than a quarter inch below the lower edge of the collar.
- d. In no case is the bulk of the hair permitted to neither interfere with the proper wearing of fire service headgear nor will it be permitted to interfere with the wearing of the SCBA or HEPA mask.
- e. Hair must be of a natural color and not distracting or extreme in appearance.
- f. Only pins, combs or barrettes (any type elastic hair bands) that are similar in color to the individual hair color may be worn.

C. Facial Hair

- a. Members shall be clean-shaven; however, facial hair such as; sideburns, mustaches, and hair under the bottom lip must be neatly trimmed and are permitted under this policy.
- b. Sideburns will not extend downward below the bottom of the earlobe, with the flare no wider than 1 1/4 inches. They will be neatly trimmed, shall not be further than 3/8 inch from the face, and shall not cover any part of the ear.
- c. The mustache will not curl upward in the "handlebar" mustache style, or extend out from the face more than 3/8 inch. The mustache or other facial hair will not make contact with or interfere with the safe operation of the HEPA or SCBA face piece.

D. Jewelry

- 1. Necklaces will be kept inside the shirt.
- 2. Suppression personnel shall not wear earrings.
- 3. Any other jewelry is allowed as long as it does not distract from the uniform.

E. Cosmetics

- 1. Female uniformed personnel may wear cosmetics that are consistent with a professional uniform appearance.
- 2. Nail polish shall not be extreme in nature or color. Nail length will not be distracting or impede the use of medical and/or structural gloves.

F. Body piercing Jewelry

- 1. Obvious facial and tongue piercing shall not be worn.
- 2. Body piercings are not to be visible at any time.

G. Tattoos

- 1. No tattoos are permitted on the face or neck of any personnel.
- 2. Visible tattoos will not be offensive to other employees or citizens.