



Kern County Sheriff's Office

Policies and Procedures

TITLE: UNIFORM APPEARANCE REGULATIONS			NO: K-100
APPROVED: Donny Youngblood, Sheriff-Coroner			
EFFECTIVE: March 1, 2003	REVIEWED: 04/03/2025	REVISED: 04/03/2025	UPDATED: 04/03/2025

POLICY

The Sheriff-Coroner shall be the final authority on all matters pertaining to official uniforms, equipment and identification items of the Sheriff's Office. All items of the uniform shall meet the requirements set forth in this section. Nothing is to be added to, subtracted from, substituted for, changed or altered on the uniform or in the uniform specifications except by written order of the Sheriff-Coroner.

Specialized units such as SWAT, SERT, K-9, and OHV that require a uniform other than specified in the following sections must have their respective uniforms approved by the Sheriff-Coroner. The specifications for such uniforms are covered in their own respective policy under the K-Section. Any proposed changes to these uniforms shall comply with the procedures set forth in this policy.

During an emergency situation, when it is impossible to obtain the articles of apparel or equipment specified, or when the specifications cannot be maintained, the Sheriff-Coroner may order such deviations as are warranted.

It is the intent of this section to ensure all members have and wear apparel, equipment, and identification that meets the specifications of the Sheriff's Office and to assist them in purchasing items that are of good quality. It is also intended to ensure authorized suppliers guarantee their merchandise, and that merchandise sold conforms to Sheriff's Office specifications.

All members shall possess uniforms and dress in accordance with the rules and regulations as specified herein, according to their job descriptions. All Reserve personnel shall abide by the rules and regulations as specified.

DEFINITION

Uniform: "A distinctive dress or suit worn, especially when on duty, by members of the same organization."

DIRECTIVE 1

The Support Services Section shall be responsible for the official records covering uniform and equipment matters and performing the following duties:

- Maintain a complete and current file of specifications.
- Maintain a list of "approved suppliers".
- Furnish approved suppliers with copies of authorized changes in specifications.
- Maintain a permanent file of any uniform or equipment exceptions granted by the Sheriff-Coroner.

DIRECTIVE 2

A designation of "Approved Supplier" has been established to indicate to members the names and addresses of those persons or organizations who have agreed to stock uniforms and equipment meeting all specifications of the Sheriff's Office. Each supplier shall guarantee that the items sold conform to specifications required by the Sheriff's Office.

A merchant who wishes to become an "Approved Supplier" must address a letter to the Sheriff-Coroner stating the fact. A copy of the Sheriff's Office uniform and equipment specifications will then be furnished to the merchant by the Lieutenant of the Support Services Section.

If, after reviewing the specifications, the merchant desires designation as an "Approved Supplier", they must send a letter to the Sheriff-Coroner stating that they will readily refund to the buyer the entire purchase price of any article of uniform or equipment which is substandard or is not made in strict accordance with departmental specifications in effect at the time of purchase. The merchant must allow for inspection of garments and equipment at their place of business, by a member of the Office designated by the Sheriff-Coroner, during normal business hours. The designation of a merchant as an "Approved Supplier" may be withdrawn for cause. In that event, the name of the merchant shall be removed from the roster of "Approved Suppliers". The merchant shall be so notified by the Support Services Section.

Uniformed personnel desiring to register a formal complaint regarding an article of uniform apparel or equipment purchased from an "Approved Supplier" shall contact the Support Services Section Lieutenant for investigation and disposition.

Suppliers may not sell the Sheriff's Office shoulder patches and other official insignia to other than authorized Sheriff's Office members per County Ordinance.

DIRECTIVE 3

Any garment or equipment purchased, pursuant to specifications in effect at the time of purchase, may continue to be used on duty until it is no longer serviceable, unless there is a specified phase-out period agreed upon by the respective employee association(s)/union(s) and the Sheriff-Coroner. The uniform shall be worn only during on-duty hours and when necessary to travel incidentally to duty unless authorized by the Sheriff-Coroner.

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Members shall maintain their uniforms in a clean, serviceable condition, ready for immediate use. They shall be replaced when they are so worn or damaged that they present an unacceptable appearance.

DIRECTIVE 4

The Sheriff-Coroner shall determine which personnel shall wear a uniform during their tour of duty. If circumstances or special assignments arise which require a temporary change for specific personnel, a supervisor of the rank of Sergeant or above may authorize and change for a period of no longer than three (3) working days.

Every employee who is required to have a uniform shall at all times be certain the condition of their uniform is such that it can be worn with dignity and pride and its appearance will produce a favorable impression and command respect. At a minimum, they will ensure that:

- All buttons will be in place and firmly attached;
- All leather gear shall be properly worn, kept dyed, and free of obvious abrasions;
- Shoes or boots shall be polished, and the heels and soles shall be in good condition;
- The uniform shall be kept clean and properly pressed with sharp creases as prescribed;
- No item or article shall be repaired, mended or darned to the degree it is distracting or causes the uniform to appear tacky;
- Handkerchiefs and other items shall not project from trouser pockets and items shall not be carried in shirt pockets that do not allow such pockets to lay flat;
- Keys, flashlights, batons, and other articles shall not be worn in a manner that allows them to make noise while walking;
- No keys or other articles shall be inserted into the buckle of the gun belt;
- No pencils, pens or other items shall protrude extensively from any pocket or be carried over an ear or stuck in or under any headgear.
- No glasses or any other item except a radio microphone may be carried or otherwise hung in a shirt or jacket shoulder strap.
- Deputies may be excused from wearing certain items of uniform and equipment by the officer in charge of detail when the removal of these items may protect the deputies from possible injury.

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DIRECTIVE 5

No distinguishable part of any official uniform, which would identify the wearer as a member of the Sheriff's Office, shall be worn in conjunction with civilian clothes.

No visible necklaces, ornamental bracelets or anklets shall be worn while in uniform. Medical Alert I.D. bracelets are permitted. Rings should be kept to a minimum and be of a size that does not present a danger to the wearer. Female deputies with pierced ears are permitted to wear small stud earrings. Wrist watches are permitted.

DIRECTIVE 6

Inspections may be made at any time by any supervisor of the rank of Sergeant or above. At any time, the Sheriff-Coroner may inspect all or any portion of the Sheriff's Office.

All garments shall be maintained as outlined and shall be replaced when they no longer meet those standards. Departmentally issued equipment is county property and shall be maintained in a clean, serviceable condition at all times. Replacement or re-issuance of county issued equipment will be governed by the following procedure(s): Items of county owned equipment requiring replacement, or repairs, are to be returned to the Property Room.

A master list of equipment, that is provided by the County, will be kept by the Property Room, as outlined in this manual.

PROCEDURE A

In the event that an officer believes that an item of county issued equipment is defective, non-functional or not presentable and is in need of replacement, the officer shall:

- Present the piece of equipment to the Property Control Officer, who will issue replacement equipment to the officer.
- The Property Control Officer shall note on the officer's equipment card what item was replaced and the date of said replacement. The Property Control Officer will make the appropriate entries into the officer equipment inventory computer system at the time of the transaction.
- The Property Control Officer will decide whether to dispose of the equipment replaced or send it to the vendor for repair and return to inventory.

DIRECTIVE 7

Whenever any member retires, resigns, is discharged, or suspended, they shall surrender to the Property Room all property assigned to them. Upon separation from the Kern County Sheriff's Office, this directive shall be complied with before the employee receives their final paycheck.

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PROCEDURE B

If county equipment is lost or stolen, on or off duty, the member the equipment is assigned to will:

- Report the loss to the Sheriff's Office Watch Lieutenant immediately.
- Complete a numbered incident report setting forth the details.
- If stolen in another agency's jurisdiction, notify the agency of jurisdiction and have a crime report taken in addition.
- Obtain that agency's case number.

PROCEDURE C

When personally owned articles of apparel or equipment are damaged in the "line of duty" and the member desires to submit a claim for replacement or reimbursement, they will:

- Obtain a copy of the "Case Report" which pertains to the activity where the damage was sustained.
- Obtain a "Statement of Cost" or invoice from an "Authorized Supplier" or merchant where the article was purchased.
 - Include name and address of "Authorized Supplier" or merchant on their letterhead.
 - Replacement or repair costs and a description of the damaged article.
- Complete a "Report of Loss or Damage to Personal Property" form (attachment A).
- Forward the documents outlined above and a photo of the damaged article through the chain of command to the appropriate Chief Deputy. This form requires the Sheriff-Coroner's final approval/disapproval before submission to County Counsel, Risk Management.

DIRECTIVE 8

A Uniform Committee consisting of the Chief Deputy from each bureau or his/her designee will review all proposed changes in or additions to uniform specifications. The Uniform Committee will determine whether such proposal(s) will be implemented. No testing of uniform apparel or equipment will be conducted without the express authorization of the Uniform Committee.

PROCEDURE D

When any Sheriff's Office member seeks to recommend a change or addition to uniform specifications, they will:

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- Identify in writing the specific need for specification change or addition, and
- Explain why existing specifications do not meet that need, and
- List the recommended change(s) or addition(s) in detail and in a format consistent with existing specifications, and
- Submit the recommendation to the Support Services Bureau Chief Deputy through the chain-of-command. The Support Services Bureau Chief Deputy will cause the Uniform Committee to convene to review and consider the recommended change(s) or addition(s).
- Prior to forwarding any proposed recommendation to the Support Services Bureau Chief Deputy, each officer in the chain-of-command will review, and revise if needed, the recommendation for form and content. Only the Uniform Committee will make the final approval or denial of the proposed recommendation.

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