

Office of the Sheriff
Somerset County, Maryland

General Order: 01-14-13

Effective Date: January 1, 2017

Revised Date: December 1, 2016

Chapter 9

Section 1

Personal Appearance and Uniform Equipment

1. Policy

- A. Sworn employees of the Somerset County Sheriff's Office are required to be neat, clean, and well groomed at all times, except where authorized to dress otherwise in a covert investigative assignment.
- B. Footwear, leather equipment, and brass will be regularly polished and side arms shall be clean and serviceable at all times.
- C. To ensure compliance with standards prescribed in this section, each Deputy may be inspected monthly.
- D. Clothing will be clean and give a pressed appearance before each tour of duty.
- E. Shoes will be free of dirt. Foul weather footwear will be conservative in nature.

2. Hair Regulations

- A. Sworn employees while on duty will be required to keep their hair in a neat and well groomed manner.
- B. Mustaches will be kept clean, neatly trimmed. No extreme styles will be worn, such as handlebar mustaches.
- C. Other facial hair, such as beards or goatees of any type may not be worn, except for medical reasons and with written authorization of the Sheriff.

3. Uniform Appearance

- A. The uniform must command respect as it identifies the Deputy as a representative of the Somerset County Sheriff's Office. The uniform must be worn with pride and in a way to bring credit to the Somerset County Sheriff's Office and should be kept in excellent condition.
- B. A Deputy may only wear or use uniform equipment that has been approved by the Sheriff or his designee.
- C. The Somerset County Sheriff's Office will provide uniforms and equipment necessary for the performance of the duties of all employees to the extent permitted by the budget.
- D. Deputies will not allow another Sheriff's Office employee to use their badges or other means or personal identification.
- E. Uniformed personnel when on duty will appear in the prescribed uniform.
- F. All Sheriff's Office employees whose police powers have been suspended for a period of 30 days or more as a result of disciplinary action will surrender to the Sheriff for the period of the suspension their issued weapon, badge, and all issued cards which identify them as being a Sheriff's Office employee.
- G. All Sheriff's Office employees are responsible for uniform, motor vehicle or other equipment issued to them, and, where it is established that this equipment is lost or damaged, they may face administrative disciplinary action, and or be required to reimburse the agency.

4. Classes of Uniform

- A. **Class A:** Dress Uniform or Blouse, Sam Browne belt with shoulder strap.
- B. **Class B:** Patrol Jacket, light weight jacket, winter shirt, sweater, trousers and tie.
- C. **Class C:** Short sleeve shirt, trousers, sweater and lightweight jacket.
- D. **Class D:** Uniform BDU trousers and shirts, sweater, patrol jacket and lightweight jacket.
- E. When a class of uniform has been designated, it will be worn as described in the Manual. The dates of change from the class C and class B uniforms will be at the discretion of the Sheriff or his designee.

- F. Under no circumstances will different classes of uniforms be worn during a single tour of duty.
- G. The **Class A uniform** will be designated as a dress uniform to be worn, generally during the winter months. This uniform will be worn by Deputies when attending or assigned to an official function and when instructed by the Sheriff or Chief Deputy.
- H. The **Class B uniform** will be designated as a work uniform and may be worn for routine duties or assignments. At the indiscretion, Deputies may wear the patrol jacket or the lightweight jacket.
- I. The **Class C uniform** will generally be worn during the summer months and fall.
- J. The **Class D uniform** may be worn at any time during the year by nightshift personnel. At the discretion of the Sheriff or Chief Deputy, the Class D uniform may be worn by all SCSO personnel during inclement weather; i.e. (snow storms or hurricanes).

5. Soft Body Armor

- A. Personnel required to wear the issued protective vest while on duty are as follows:
 - 1) Those holding the rank of Deputy through Sergeant while working in uniform.
 - 2) Personnel who are instructed to wear a vest because of the nature of their assignments.
- B. Personnel exempt from the mandatory wearing of vests if:
 - 1) A medical reason is furnished by the employee's physician.
 - 2) The Deputy's supervisor determines the employee is assigned to a function where the vest would interfere with the completion of the assignment.
- C. All Deputies are required to have their vests readily available while on duty.
- D. An employee struck by gunfire or some other object in an area protected by the body armor will:
 - 1) Be taken to a hospital as soon as possible, regardless of whether the assaulted Deputy feels any ill effects or whether any external injury is recognizable.
 - 2) Immediately report the incident to a supervisor.
 - 3) Complete, in every instance, a Somerset County Sheriff's Office Form 100, Employee's Report of injury.

- 4) Permit the taking of photographs of the affected body area.
 - 5) Request another vest and return the original vest to the Chief Deputy or his designee.
- E. The effectiveness of the Kevlar material to deter injury is substantially reduced when it becomes wet. The Kevlar panels should only be cleaned when necessary for hygienic purposes and when only in accordance with the following instructions;
- 1) Do not machine wash or scrub with a brush.
 - 2) Do not send to a commercial laundry or dry clean.
 - 3) Wipe with a damp cloth and dry towel. If badly soiled, inserts may be soaked in warm water, no soap or bleach. Machine dry in home dryer, cotton setting, approximately 140 degrees Fahrenheit for 70 to 75 minutes. Do not dry in sunlight.
 - 4) Inserts must be thoroughly dry before wearing.
 - 5) If the Kevlar panels become so soiled they do not respond to the above instructions, replacement panels should be obtained.
 - 6) The carrier portion of the vest may be cared for according to the instructions on the manufacturer's label.
 - 7) When vests are worn, it is recommended that a tee-shirt be worn underneath as a barrier to protect against perspiration and chaffing.
 - 8) The body armor should not be left lying unprotected inside an automobile or left exposed to sunlight for extended periods of time since ultraviolet rays have a deteriorating effect on the Kevlar material.

6. Special Work Uniforms

- A. Deputies assigned to the Somerset County Sheriff's Office H.E.A.T Team or assigned as a K-9 handler will be issued special work uniforms.
- 1) Somerset County Sheriff's Office H.E.A.T Team uniform includes:
 - i. Tactical Vest
 - ii. Green Coveralls
 - iii. Kevlar helmet

iv. Tactical eye glasses

v. Leather gloves

2) K-9 handler uniform includes:

i. Coveralls

7. Non-issue equipment

- A. This sub-section is to provide employees the opportunity to use certain personally owned equipment which they, through specialized training and experience, have found enhances personal safety and performance, while ensuring proper use, uniformity, quality of equipment and proper training. It does not replace procedures provided for approval to use secondary weapons.
- B. Personal non-issue equipment to be worn as part of the uniform, in addition to or in place of issued equipment, must be approved in writing by the Sheriff or his designee.
- C. Deputies requesting the use of personally owned equipment to be worn on the uniform gun belt will present the item(s) along with a completed Request for Approval to Use Non-issued Equipment, Somerset County Sheriff's Office Form 144, to their supervisor along with information concerning training and experience.
- D. The Sheriff's approval or non-approval of the use of non-issued equipment is final.

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Section 2

Outstanding Performance

1. Recognition

- A. Outstanding performance by an individual or a group of Somerset County Sheriff's Office employees will be recognized and officially recorded as set forth in this section. It is recognized that a Deputy's actions during an incident may merit more than one award, however, only one award will be given in recognition of the Deputy's efforts and that award should be the highest award available fitting the prescribed criteria.
- B. The Sheriff, in his discretion may award multiple awards related to one incident or occurrence.
- C. The Sheriff at his discretion may authorize the awarding and recognition of Somerset County Sheriff's Office awards to members of allied agencies, fire and emergency medical services personnel. In addition, nothing in this section shall prevent a civilian employee from receiving an award or ribbon if they meet established criteria.

2. Recommendations

- A. Recommendations should be submitted as soon as possible after the occurrence to the Awards Committee Chairperson.
- B. Recommendations must be received within one year after the occurrence to be given consideration.
- C. All recommendations for Deputies, Unit or Shift will be accompanied by a report containing the following:

- 1) A complete and detailed description of the incident and action taken by the employee.
- 2) Whether the action was initiated by the employee or resulted from an assignment.
- 3) The duty status of the employee at the time.
- 4) Whether the action taken was a matter of routine or was it beyond the limits of duty.
- 5) If the employee's life or safety was at risk while performing the action.
- 6) Opinion from an attending physician if the action in fact did save a life, if not otherwise obvious.

3. Awards and Recommendations

All recommendations for awards will be reviewed by the Awards Review Committee. Awards will be presented at formal ceremonies, which will be conducted as determined by the Sheriff.

4. Awards

- A. **Medal of Honor** – For presentation to an employee whose performance has been identified as outstanding, above and beyond the call of duty, and where a definite risk of life by the employee was involved.
- B. **Sheriff's Commendation** – For performance of a member or members is identified as exceptional, thereby exemplifying the highest standards of the law enforcement profession.
- C. **Injury Award** – Authorized when an employee sustains a life threatening injury or significant but non- life threatening injury while engaged in a law enforcement activity.
- D. **Life Saving Award** – Authorized in instances where on or more employee has performed a life saving procedure in an exemplary manner.
- E. **Unit Citation** – Authorized in instances where an entire Unit, Shift or other unit of the organization has demonstrated superior performance during the calendar year that is clearly deemed exceptional and worthy of recognition.

- F. **Distinguished Service Award** – Authorized in instances of outstanding performance by an employee over a sustained period of a year or more. Performance could include community service, community policing or identified enforcement activities to further the mission of the Sheriff’s Office.
- G. **Meritorious Service Award** – Authorized in instances where a Sheriff’s Office employee recognizes the need for, as well as researches and develops plans or ideas that do at least one of the following: saves money or time, increases efficiency or morale, enhances the image of the Somerset County Sheriff’s Office.
- H. **Chief Deputy Award** – Authorized in instances where an employee has demonstrated initiative, dedication and exemplary performance throughout the calendar year. Only two awards will be authorized per year. Awards can be given to sworn personnel holding the rank of Deputy through Sergeant, civilian employees and to fire and emergency medical services personnel.
- I. **Legion of Merit** – May be authorized in instances where Sheriff’s office personnel have excelled and demonstrated exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services and achievements.
- J. **Deputy of the Year** – To recognize a deputy who represents the finest attributes of the Somerset County Sheriff’s Office and for outstanding performance during the calendar year.
- K. **Professional Development Award** – to recognize Noncommissioned Officers and Commissioned Officers who have completed all the prescribed leadership courses associated with the Federal Bureau of Investigation LEEDA program.
- L. **Outstanding Volunteer Service Award** - To recognize those members of the Somerset County Sheriff’s Office who perform substantial volunteer service to the local community above and beyond the duties required as a member of the Sheriff’s Office. Such volunteer service must be made in a sustained and direct nature towards the civilian community, must be significant in nature to produce tangible results, and must reflect favorably on the Agency.
- M. **Superior Service Cross** - To recognize personnel upon their retirement from service with the Somerset County Sheriff’s Office.
- N. **Longevity Award** – The longevity ribbon is awarded on the basis of time served with the Somerset County Sheriff’s Office. The years of service, in five year increments, is printed on the ribbon. Only the highest years of service ribbon shall be worn by the employee.

- O. **Safe Driving Award** - The Safe Driving Award is presented to any deputy who has not been involved in any departmental accident (motor vehicle collision) during the previous five calendar years.
- P. **Certificate of Recognition** – Authorized in instances where an employee has voluntarily provided exemplary and meritorious service.
- Q. **Certificate of Appreciation** – Authorized in instances where a citizen has voluntarily provided exemplary and meritorious service to a Sheriff’s Office employee or to another citizen.

5. Subsequent Awards – Ribbons

- A. Ribbon with 1 star – 2 Awards
- B. Ribbon with 2 stars – 4 Awards
- C. Ribbon with 3 stars – 6 Awards
- D. Ribbon with 4 stars – 8 Awards

6. Number of Ribbons to be worn

- A. All awarded ribbons may be worn on the class “A” uniform only.
- B. Deputies will wear no more than five ribbons on their duty uniform.
- C. Command Staff may wear all awarded commendation ribbons on their duty uniform.
- D. The only insignia or ribbons that may be worn are those issued by the Sheriff’s Office.
- E. Awards and commendations awarded by other agencies or departments may be worn with the approval of the Sheriff or his designee.

7. Insignia

- A. H.E.A.T
- B. FTO
- C. Honor Guard
- D. K-9
- E. National Association of School Resource Officers

8. Number of Medals to be worn

- A. All medals may be worn on the Class A uniform.
- B. Medals may be worn at ceremonial occasions, but will not be worn at funerals.
- C. There will be no more than one unit insignia worn at one time on all classes of uniforms.
- D. All insignia and ribbons will be worn on the right side of the uniform.
- E. Ribbons will be placed ½ inch above the name plate.
- F. Insignia will be placed ½ inch above the ribbons.

9. Proposed Awards

- A. Any new awards must be submitted to the Chief Deputy or his designee for approval.
- B. The criteria and design for the proposed award must accompany the request for approval.

10. Award Review Committee

- A. The Award Review Committee will consist of the following:
 - 1) Two (2) Corporals and a Deputy.
 - 2) The Chairperson of the Committee will be appointed by the Chief Deputy.
- B. The Chairperson of the Awards Committee accepts submissions and between November 15th and December 31st of the calendar year to consider the nominations.
- C. The committee will submit its nominations to the Chief Deputy by January 10th of the next calendar year. Nominations acted upon by the Awards Committee are subject to approval by the Sheriff or his designee.

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Section 3

Personal Appearance Standards – Tattoos

1. Purpose

The personal appearance of members of the Office of the Sheriff is vital to serving the public in executing the Office's policing powers. This policy provides guidance on the permissible personal appearance standards for members of the Office of the Sheriff, with specific attention devoted to tattoos.

2. Policy

Office of the Sheriff members shall maintain their appearance in a professional image that is appropriate for optimal execution of the Office's police powers and for the Office of the Sheriff's member's respective assignments. Office of the Sheriff personal appearance standards hinge in respect to safety requirements, appearance conformity and the societal expectations of the community served. Tattoos or other body art fall within the Office's consideration of a professional image and as such are subject to the Office's review, enforcement and discipline.

3. Tattoos

- A. While serving in any official capacity as a member of the Office of the Sheriff, the concealment of tattoos or other body art shall be made by any and all available reasonable efforts. While serving in any official capacity as a member of the Office of the Sheriff no offensive tattoo or body art shall be visible. Examples of offensive

tattoos or body art includes, but are not limited to, those that portray sexual, racial, religious, ethnic, national-origin, sexual orientation, age, physical/mental disability/condition, and marital status discrimination. Further, offensive and discriminatory tattoos or body art includes any that relate to drug use, gang, sexually explicit acts, supremacist or extremist group affiliation, or other obscene material.

- B. Members of the Office of the Sheriff that already have tattoos or other body art prior to the enactment of this General Order will be exempt from the above provision. Notwithstanding the foregoing exemption, said members of the Office of the Sheriff must use available reasonable efforts to conceal any and all tattoos or other body art while serving in any official capacity as a member of the Office of the Sheriff. Members of the Office of the Sheriff, including those within the above exemption, cannot get, in any form or manner, any additional tattoos or other body art.

4. Religious Accommodations

The religious beliefs and needs of members of the Office of the Sheriff should be reasonably accommodated. Requests for religious accommodation should generally be granted unless there is a compelling security or safety reason and denying the request is the least restrictive means available to ensure security or safety. The Sheriff should be advised any time a request for religious accommodation is denied.

5. Chapter Revisions

- A. General Order 1-14-13 has been revised.
- B. Revisions are effective January 1, 2017.

Ronald Howard

Sheriff
Somerset County