

	PALACIOS POLICE DEPARTMENT	
	Policy 4.5 Uniforms, Appearance, and Equipment	
	Effective Date: 1/04/2020	Replaces:02/07/2006
	Approved: <i>Milton Rivera</i> Milton Rivera, Chief of Police	
	Reference: 1.11, 1.12, 2.13, 7.17, and 7.23.	

POLICY

Proper uniforms and equipment are essential to the performance of our law enforcement duties. Officers must present a professional image to the community we serve, one that promotes respect and confidence. All employees must strive to present a clean, well-groomed image when wearing the departmental uniform or representing the department in any capacity.

I. PURPOSE

The purposes of this policy are to provide officers with a list of uniform and equipment items and to provide a departmental dress code for all employees, sworn and unsworn.

II. UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

- A. New employees shall be issued the uniforms and the equipment needed to perform their duties. Employees may purchase and carry additional items that are approved and authorized in writing by the Chief of Police. Employees will not wear, carry, or use any personally owned equipment without the written approval of the Chief of Police, a copy of which will be kept in the employee's personnel file. (TBP: 1.11)
- B. Each employee must sign an inventory sheet listing all uniform and equipment items issued to the employee. The inventory sheet will be maintained in the employee's personnel file.
- C. Employees are responsible for the uniforms and equipment issued.
- D. The employee's supervisor shall ensure that all departmental uniforms and equipment are returned to the department upon resignation, termination, or retirement. Failure to return all items of city property may result in legal action against the employee. (TBP:1.12)
- E. Employees shall have as a part of their issued equipment a copy of the rules and regulations and a copy of the general orders manual. Employees shall maintain these and make appropriate changes or inserts as directed.

- F. After completing their probationary period and with the approval of the Chief of Police, employees are allowed to purchase a flat wallet badge.

III. UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT PROVIDED BY THE CITY

- A. Uniforms and equipment provided to police officers by the City of Palacios shall include:

1. Three (3) pair of trousers
2. Two (2) short-sleeved shirts
3. Two (2) long-sleeved shirts
4. One (1) tie
5. One (1) shirt badge
6. One (1) name plate
7. One (1) raincoat
8. One (1) winter jacket
9. One (1) protective vest (body armor)
10. One (1) traffic vest
11. Rank insignia as needed

- B. Uniforms and equipment that are excessively worn or damaged are replaced by the department. An employee requesting replacement should have the item inspected by his/her supervisor, who will provide written approval for the replacement.

- C. With the written approval of the Chief of Police officers are allowed to purchase additional uniforms and equipment as needed or desired. These items may be purchased from any vendor, but they must comply with current uniform or equipment standards.

- D. Uniform items and equipment meeting departmental specifications and provided by individual officers shall include the following:

1. Black or navy blue undershirts
2. Black or navy blue socks
3. Footwear, black leather

- E. Uniforms or civilian business attire (coat and tie for men or equivalent for women) shall be worn for all court appearances.

IV. PROTECTIVE VESTS (TBP: 7.23)

- A. Body armor is purchased by the department for all sworn officers. Body armor will be replaced in accordance with guidelines and protocols established by the National Institute of Justice.

- B. Uniformed Officers, when working field assignments, will wear departmentally issued protective vests when on-duty or when off-duty if they are engaged in law enforcement activities. Officers not working field assignments will maintain their vests where they are readily accessible in the event they are needed. Any officer participating in any search warrant execution or other high-risk activity will wear a protective vest.
- C. The Chief of Police may grant exceptions to this requirement during periods of extreme weather. During such periods, officers working in the field must keep their protective vests where there are immediately accessible.
- D. Officers shall routinely inspect personal body armor for signs of damage and for general cleanliness. Because dirt and perspiration may erode ballistic panels, each officer shall be responsible for cleaning personal body armor in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

V. REFLECTIVE VESTS

Agency personnel are issued and shall wear the high-visibility reflective vest as soon as practical when directing traffic or working at the scene of an accident.
(TBP: 7.17)

VI. DEPARTMENTAL APPEARANCE REQUIREMENTS (TBP: 2.13)

A. Uniform Employees

1. When wearing the uniform, employees will be in full uniform, including all items that are integral parts of the uniform. All uniform and accessories must be clean and well pressed. The hat is optional except at formal occasions. No part of the uniform is worn with civilian clothing or vice-versa.
2. Undershirts worn with an open-collar, short-sleeve shirt shall be navy blue or black in color. Shirrtails will be worn tucked in at all times. Employees wearing a long-sleeved shirt may wear a dark navy or black turtleneck or mock turtleneck during cold weather.
3. Rank Insignia. The Chief will wear a three gold star on each point of the uniform shirt collar. Employees holding the rank of captain will wear ½-inch gold captain's bars (two gold bars) on each collar point ½ inch from the front edge of the collar centered between the neck line and the bottom edge of the collar. Employees holding the rank of lieutenant will wear one ½-inch bar on each collar point ½ inch from the front edge of the collar centered between the neckline and the bottom edge of the collar. Employees holding the rank of sergeant will wear embroidered chevrons approximately ¼ inch below the department-issued shoulder patch with the single point up.

4. Nameplates. Each employee, regardless of rank, will wear a departmentally issued nameplate, centered ½ inch above the right shirt pocket seam. The nameplate will have the officer's last name and a first initial or first name. The nameplate for officers holding the rank of sergeant or higher will be gold while those with a rank below sergeant will be silver.
5. Department Shirt Badges. All sworn personnel when in the standard duty uniform will wear their department badge prominently displayed above the left-shirt pocket.
6. Footwear. Footwear will be solid black and capable of being shined. Officers must wear solid navy blue or black socks if the socks are visible.
7. Officers are authorized to wear baseball style caps only during inclement weather or in conjunction with a utility uniform during specialized assignments or outdoor training. Winter headgear may consist of a navy blue or black knit cap with no visible logos or emblems.

B. Award Ribbons or Medals

Commendation ribbons and medals approved for wear by the department will be worn, centered, above the nameplate on the uniform shirt, no more than three across and three up, and will be worn in order of importance. The wearing of commendation ribbons and medals is optional for those officers who are recipients of such awards while wearing the standard duty uniform and while assigned to standard duty assignments. The wearing of commendation ribbons and medals is mandatory for those officers who are recipients of such awards in all formal settings.

C. Plain Clothes Assignments (Sworn and Non-Sworn Employees)

With the exception of officers working in a covert capacity, clothing worn by employees in any departmental, non-uniform assignment will conform to accepted business practices. These include but are not limited to the following:

1. Slacks, dress shirts (long or short sleeved), ties (excluding bow ties), socks, shoes, and appropriate headwear.
2. Headwear must be appropriate for business dress attire, and the particular item must have prior approval from the Chief or his/her designee.
3. Business or sports coats are optional unless required for a court appearance or other specific event or task.
4. Socks should coordinate with the pants. White socks are prohibited unless worn with boots that conceal the socks.
5. Footwear should be clean and polished, with heels and toes in good repair. Normal business shoes, including slip-ons (loafers) or lace-ups, are acceptable. Boots are acceptable, provided they are in good taste. Flip-flops are inappropriate.

6. Female business attire will include the previously mentioned clothing and non-revealing blouses, skirts, dresses, and appropriate footwear. Flip-flops are inappropriate.
7. If a sidearm is worn on the waist, the officer's department badge must be prominently displayed next to the sidearm.
8. Plain-clothes officers may wear a vest or jacket that readily identifies the wearer as a police officer during call-outs, specific assignments, or extra-duty assignments when appropriate.
9. Plain-clothes sworn personnel are required to maintain at least one complete standard uniform at all times in case they are called upon for uniformed duties.

D. Special Assignments

Employees placed in special assignments, including covert or undercover assignments, special events, or other special operations, will wear clothing approved by the Chief of Police or the supervisor of the operation.

E. Court Attire

Officers attending court will be in uniform or civilian clothes to include a shirt and a tie for male employees and appropriate business attire for female employees.

F. Physical Appearance

1. Employees shall maintain their physical appearance in accordance with good taste and professionalism. Hair shall not be dyed, colored, or styled in a manner that would draw undue attention to the employee. Female employees will apply their makeup tastefully. Male employees shall not appear for work needing a shave or haircut.
2. Hair length
 - a. Male employees shall wear their hair so as to present a groomed appearance. Hair will not extend past the collar at the back of the neck. Hair on the sides will not extend below the top of the ear and must be mildly tapered. Hair in the front will not extend below the middle of the forehead. Sideburns may extend no lower than the lowest tip of the employee's ear lobe. They shall be of a naturally even width and shall end with a clean-shaven horizontal line.
 - b. Female employees shall wear their hair so as to present a groomed appearance. They shall not be restricted as to the length of their hair; however, if the hair extends below the bottom of the collar it shall be secured in a bun or ponytail. It shall not hang into the employee's face, either in front or on the sides.
3. Mustaches and beards

Mustaches will not extend beyond the corner of the mouth on a horizontal line, nor below the corner of the mouth on a vertical line, nor below the top line of the upper lip. They shall always be

neatly trimmed. No beards are authorized for sworn personnel unless there is a medical condition diagnosed by a physician. The Chief may elect temporary beards for community fund raising events.

4. Jewelry

- a. Female employees may wear earrings, provided they are small and tasteful in appearance. Male employees are not permitted to wear any type of earring.
- b. Employees in uniform are discouraged from wearing chains and necklaces as they could be lost or cause an injury during the performance of police activities.
- c. A female employee in civilian attire may deviate from these regulations with the approval of her supervisor.
- d. To present a uniform and objectively neutral appearance to the public, non-departmental jewelry or pins shall not be worn on the uniform at any time or on plain clothes while on duty unless specifically authorized by the Chief of Police.

5. Personal Hygiene

Employees shall practice good personal hygiene at all times, including use of soap, water, and deodorant. Employees shall not report for work emitting an offensive body odor. A moderate amount of perfume or aftershave may be used.

6. Tattoos, Body Art, Piercing, or Branding

- a. While representing the department in an official capacity, no department personnel shall exhibit any visible tattoos, body art, or branding. The only acceptable methods for covering tattoos, body art, or branding are with the official uniform or plainclothes apparel. This regulation does not apply to undercover officers when they are, in fact, undercover. No agency personnel will have tattoos, body art, or branding that cannot be covered by the official uniform or plain-clothes apparel.
- b. With the exception of pierced ears, body piercing is not authorized for any agency personnel while representing the department. Body piercing(s) must be covered by the official uniform or plainclothes apparel when agency personnel are representing the department.

VII. USE OF DEPARTMENTAL FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT AND EXPECTATION OF PRIVACY.

All employees, reserves, and volunteers are advised that the use of departmental facilities, lockers, vehicles, and any equipment, including computers, telephones, or other electronic devices, is governed by departmental rules and regulations and that there is no expectation of privacy regardless of whether locks, passwords, or privacy settings are employed.