

UNIFORM, CLOTHING POLICY

1.0 Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to establish standards and guidance in the wearing of uniforms for those employees and persons assigned duties with the Hidalgo County Judge's Office, Office of Emergency Management. The uniform allows a visual identification of the person's assignment and agency at a glance. The uniform also serves to reflect a professional appearance.

2.0 Affects:

The policy affects all personnel assigned to the Hidalgo County Office of Emergency Management.

3.0 Proper Uniform Prescribed:

3.1 Personnel wearing the uniform will only wear the uniform and insignia while on duty; on official business, or while on assignment, as prescribed and approved herein.

3.2 In addition to on-duty wear, uniformed members are authorized to wear the uniform while attending any special ceremonial event, memorial religious event, meeting, training, or other assigned duties that may require the uniform to clearly identify the person as a representative from the Office of Emergency Management.

3.3 Department Head/ Supervisor may authorize other forms of dress/clothing during special assignments and or designated casual attire days.

4.0 Improper Uniform Wear Prohibited:

Personnel issued a uniform will not wear the uniform or any portion thereof while off-duty, to any political gathering, or any other public or private gathering or to any business, or location that may be deemed as inappropriate.

5.0 Appearance in Uniform:

5.1 Personnel shall maintain a neat and professional appearance while in uniform that shall be representative of the County and the Office of Emergency Management.

5.2 In general, the uniform shall be clean and neatly pressed. Footwear shall be clean and polished. Footwear that is not polish-able shall be maintained clean and free of

debris. Uniform shirts that are designed to be tucked into the trousers/pants shall be tucked in.

5.2 In those circumstances where the uniform becomes extremely soiled or dirty because of use, personnel will make every effort to change into a clean uniform within a reasonable amount of time.

6.0 Approved Uniforms:

Only those uniforms listed herein shall be worn while on-duty. Insignia emblems may embroider upon those uniforms, but no personalized embroidery shall be allowed to permanently affix to any uniform. Embroidered name tags are allowed but they must be affixed to the uniform with "Velcro" type tape. A metal name plate may be displayed when in uniform. The name tape or plate shall be worn directly above the right breast pocket, no more than 1/8 inch above the pocket tab.

6.1 Uniform_- May also be called the utility uniform. This will be the daily wear uniform and will normally consist of a solid colored shirt with solid colored trousers/pants. Dependent upon the time of year and the weather, a long sleeve shirt may be worn in place of the short sleeve one.

6.2 Headgear: Headgear is considered personal protective equipment and personnel will wear the appropriate headgear commensurate with the circumstances and situation. This includes but is not limited to "baseball type cap, "boonie style" floppy hats and hard hats.. Headgear will have the appropriate insignias identifying the person wearing it as a member of the Office of Emergency Management.

6.3 Footwear: Footwear is considered personal protective equipment and personnel will wear the appropriate footwear commensurate with the circumstance and situation. This includes but is not limited to, black polish-able boots or shoes, "steel toe" boots or shoes, hot weather boots/shoes, SAR boots, sneakers/tennis shoes, wet-shoes, oil resistant boots, rubber boots, etc. Other than boots or shoes worn on a daily basis, or wet-shoes, all other footwear shall meet or exceed those standards set forth by the NFPA, ANSI or OSHA.

6.4 Gloves: Gloves will be issued and worn as personal protective equipment and will be commensurate with the circumstances and situation. Other than those gloves commercially available for everyday use, all others shall meet or exceed those standards set forth by the NFPA, ANSI or OSHA.

6.5 Eyewear/Facewear: Dependant on assignment or the job at hand – eyewear may be issued to protect the eyes or face from ultraviolet light, projectiles, debris, and or heat. This section includes face and neck protectors with or without particle masks that are

flame retardant or resistant. Protective eyewear must meet or exceed those standards set forth by ANSI, NFPA, or OSHA. IE: safety goggles or safety glasses.

6.6 Light Duty T-Shirts: T-shirts shall display the Emergency Management logo over the left front upper torso, and shall have distinct markings in large bold letters of a contrasting color of the undershirt with the words "HIDALGO COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT " emblazoned upon the back that will readily identify the person wearing it. The undershirt may or may not have a front pocket.

6.7 Belts: Belts shall be worn when in uniform

6.8 Outerwear: Shall consist of coats, jackets, traffic vests, rain-coat, and other foul weather gear. All issued outerwear coats and jackets, may have the Emergency Management patch attached to sleeves. High visibility vests, raincoats and other foul weather gear shall have the words "HIDALGO COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT" emblazoned upon the back and front in reflective lettering. Traffic Vests shall meet or exceed those standards set forth for emergency responders working alongside federal highways.

7.0 Daily Wear:

The uniform of the day shall be worn daily during working hours, or during after-hour callouts. Once on-scene, individual determination may be made as to what needs to be utilized, unless information is provided beforehand about the scene hazards that would allow the responder to change into the appropriate uniform or personal protective clothing for the situation, prior to departure. Persons may remove the outer shirt and display the undershirt while on-scene to prevent damage and staining to the outer uniform shirt.

7.1 Law Enforcement Insignia: Only those persons that are licensed and commissioned as peace officers may wear any article of clothing that has the words "POLICE", "LAW ENFORCEMENT", or other similar language on them.

7.2 Civilian: Those persons that are employed by or assigned to the Office of Emergency Management may be issued uniforms or portions of uniforms, if those persons are deployable to any scene, any emergency operations center, or any other location where it will be necessary to readily identify those persons as members of the Office of Emergency Management, this includes any person that normally works within the office environment. These uniforms will not be personalized with the person's name on it. This may occur only during special situations.

8.0 Identification Card:

In addition to the standard issue Hidalgo County employee identification card those persons assigned emergency management (permanently or temporarily) duties shall be issued an identification card that identifies the bearer as a member of the Office of Emergency Management. This card may have the bearers' qualifications and credentialing imprinted on the back of it.

9.0 Civilian clothing:

Personnel assigned to or employed by the Office of Emergency Management may wear civilian type non-uniform clothing as called for by Hidalgo County Personnel Policies.

9.1 Assignment – Personnel assigned may wear clothing appropriate for the environment that they will be working in.

9.2 Clerical and Support Staff- Personnel in those assignments may wear civilian clothing on a daily basis. The clothing must be office appropriate and may be classified as business attire. Clerical and support staff will be issued uniforms for those occasions when they may be deployed to an event or assigned to work in an Emergency Operations Center. Uniforms may be worn on a daily basis in lieu of civilian clothing.

9.3 Casual Wear Days – On those days designated as such and with prior supervisory approval employees may wear business casual attire. Clothing worn must be presentable, appropriate and in good taste for an office setting, as called for by the Hidalgo County Personnel Policy.

10.0 Other:

Nothing contained within this policy shall be construed to supersede any other county policy or procedure concerning a dress code, uniform policy, or any other policy.

11.0 Alterations and Upkeep:

Any alterations to uniforms shall be the responsibility of the employee issued to. Alterations may be made to the uniforms to insure proper fit. Uniforms will not be altered to the point where they are skin-tight or the alteration will affect the performance of the clothing. Employees are expected to launder and press their own uniforms.

12.0 Budget:

Any and all items of clothing, headgear, and personal protective equipment that are issued to employees and those persons assigned to the Office of Emergency Management, shall only be purchased with County funds, and in accordance with and under the guise of standard purchasing policies of the County.

12.1 Personal Purchase: Employees are discouraged from using personal funds to purchase unique clothing and uniforms that have permanent logos of the Office of Emergency Management. Notwithstanding, nothing within this policy will preclude the purchase of clothing, uniforms, and personal protective equipment using employee's personal funds, as long as the quality and style of the clothing, uniforms and personal protective equipment meet or exceed the requirements set forth within this policy. Employees will not be reimbursed for those purchases made from personal funds. The employee purchasing their own uniforms and clothing shall notify the department head of such purchase via a memo that shall be kept in the employees file.

13.0 Separation:

Employees separating from service or employ of the Office of Emergency Management shall return all issued clothing, uniforms, personal protective equipment and other issued equipment to the Emergency Management Coordinator. Any uniform, clothing, or personal protective equipment that has the Emergency Management Badge of office permanently affixed to it, shall be surrendered to the office. Those items that were purchased with personal funds may be kept but a memorandum must be on file detailing their purchase.

14.0 Personal Protective Equipment: (PPE)

Protective equipment, including personal protective equipment for eyes, face, head, and extremities, protective clothing, respiratory devices, and protective shields provided, are to be maintained in a sanitary and reliable condition. The material for all personal protective equipment will be of such that meets or exceeds those standards set forth by ANSI, OSHA, NFPA standards or any other standard that regulates personal protective equipment.

This policy shall become effective immediately upon Commissioners Court approval.

