

Uniforms and Civilian Attire

1023.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office-authorized uniforms and civilian attire regulations. It is established to ensure that uniformed members will be readily identifiable to the public through the proper use and wearing of office uniforms, and that the appearance of members who wear civilian attire reflects favorably on the Office.

This policy addresses the wearing and maintenance of office uniforms, accessories, insignia, patches and badge; the requirements for members who wear civilian attire; and the authorized use of optional equipment and accessories by members of the Office.

Other related topics are addressed in the Badges, Patches and Identification, Office-Owned and Personal Property, and Personal Appearance Standards policies.

1023.2 POLICY

The St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office will provide uniforms for all employees who are required to wear them in the manner, quantity and frequency as needed to ensure a professional appearance. The Office may provide other office members with uniforms at the direction of the Sheriff.

All uniforms containing agency badges, patches and insignia issued to office members shall be returned to the Office upon termination, resignation, or retirement.

1023.3 UNIFORMS

The Sheriff or the authorized designee shall maintain and update uniform and equipment specifications, which should be consulted by all members as needed. Uniforms shall be worn as described therein and as specified in this policy.

The following shall apply to those assigned to wear office-issued uniforms:

- (a) Uniforms and equipment shall be maintained in a serviceable condition and shall be ready at all times for immediate use. Uniforms shall be neat, clean and appear professionally pressed. Should a uniform become damaged, defective, or worn, it shall be replaced.
- (b) Deputies in a non-uniformed assignment shall possess and maintain at all times a serviceable uniform and the necessary equipment to perform uniformed field duty.
- (c) Uniforms shall be worn in compliance with any applicable office specifications.
- (d) Members shall wear only the uniforms specified for their ranks and assignments.
- (e) Civilian attire shall not be worn in combination with any distinguishable part of a uniform. Exceptions to this include plain clothes officers or officers in an off-duty status who are required to wear the outer carrier vest for operational necessity.
- (f) Uniforms are only to be worn while on-duty, for court, at official office functions or events, while in transit to or from work, or when authorized by the Sheriff or the authorized designee.

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- (g) Members are not to purchase or drink alcoholic beverages while wearing any part of office-issued uniforms, including the uniform pants.
- (h) All supervisors will perform periodic inspections of members under their command to ensure conformance to this policy.
- (i) Supervisors are to ensure serviceability, cleanliness and exemplary appearance. Subordinates having damaged, defective or worn uniforms will be directed to have them replaced and discontinue their use.

For procedures related to Replacement Uniforms, see the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office LE Procedures Manual Replacement Uniforms/Equipment (Procedures 701)

1023.3.1 ACCESSORIES

Members shall adhere to the following when wearing office uniforms:

- (a) Sunglass frames should be dark colored and professional in appearance.
- (b) Jewelry shall be in accordance with the specifications in the Personal Appearance Standards Policy. Unless specifically authorized by the Sheriff or the authorized designee, only the following jewelry may be worn with the uniform:
 - 1. Earrings shall be stud-style and only one earring may be worn in each ear. Visible piercings on any other part of the body are not authorized while on-duty.
 - 2. Necklaces must be worn inside the uniform shirt and must not be able to fall out.
 - 3. Rings
 - 4. Wristwatch
 - 5. Medical alert bracelet

1023.3.2 INSIGNIA, PATCHES AND BADGE

Only the following elements may be affixed to office uniforms unless an exception is authorized by the Sheriff:

- (a) Shoulder patches - The authorized shoulder patches supplied by the Office shall be machine stitched to the sleeves of all uniform shirts and jackets. Velcro patches may be worn on the EST and K9 uniforms.
- (b) Badge - The office-issued metal badge must be worn on all Class A, B and C uniforms. An authorized sewn-on cloth replica will be worn on the outer carrier and all outer uniform garments as required by law..
- (c) Nameplate - The regulation metal nameplate must be worn on all Class A, B and C uniforms.
 - 1. An authorized velcro nameplate will be worn on the outer carrier and all outer uniform garments as required by law.
 - 2. The nameplate shall be centered over the right breast pocket and the bottom edge of the nameplate will touch the top of the pocket seam when wearing Class A, B, and C uniforms. The "Serving Since" plate may also be worn with the nameplate.

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- (d) Embroidered Nametapes – Employees may only apply embroidered nametapes onto approved uniform items. Embroidered nametapes must include the member's last name and identification number in a manner that is clearly visible from a conversational distance.
- (e) Rank insignia - The designated insignia indicating the member's rank must be worn at all times while in uniform. This includes the outer carrier.
- (f) Assignment insignias - Assignment insignias (e.g., EST, FTO, Drone) may be worn on Class A, B and C uniforms.
- (g) Awards insignia - Wearing of award and specialty insignias is optional. If worn, awards insignia will be worn on the uniform in accordance with procedure.

For procedures related to Insignia, Patches and Badge, see the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office LE Procedures Manual: [Insignias](#)

1023.3.3 MOURNING BAND

Uniformed members shall wear an agency approved mourning band across the office badge as directed by the Sheriff.

1023.3.4 UNIFORM HAT

- (a) Uniform Eight-Point Hat
 - 1. The uniform eight-point hat is an intricate part of the professional image of the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office and an essential part of the uniform. The uniform eight-point hat is only authorized for the Class A uniform.
- (b) Ball Cap
 - 1. The Sheriff's Office ball cap is optional, and may be worn with the Class C or D uniform.
- (c) Watch Caps
 - 1. In cold weather (40 degrees Fahrenheit or colder - wind chill factor included), an issued plain dark navy-blue watch cap may be worn with the Class C or D uniform.
 - 2. Watch Caps are not to be worn with a Class C or D short sleeved uniform shirt.
- (d) Uniform hats shall be replaced once they become faded, misshapen, or damaged and detract from the appearance of the uniform.

1023.3.5 UNIFORM OUTER GARMENTS AND JACKETS

- (a) Agency-issued or approved uniform jackets and other uniform outer garments shall comply with all applicable statutory requirements and provisions of this policy regarding officer identification.
- (b) Jackets or outerwear issued for use as part of a special assignment or collateral assignment must be approved by the Assistant Sheriff and must ensure members are able to meet all policy requirements and statutory requirements for identification.

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- (c) If applicable, the agency identification card attached to a lanyard shall be worn on the front of and outside the outermost garment so that it remains clearly visible and unobstructed.
- (d) Members shall not wear an outer garment in a manner that covers, conceals, or otherwise prevents the display of identification required by law or this policy.

1023.3.6 FACE COVERINGS AND UNIFORM IDENTIFICATION

- (a) Uniformed sworn members shall clearly display the following minimum identifiers on the outermost garment of every uniform, including outerwear, protective clothing, jackets, vests, and weather gear:
 - 1. The member's last name, in uppercase lettering, on the front-facing side;
 - 2. The member's unique employee identification number on the front-facing side; and
 - 3. The name of the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office.
- (b) The required identifiers shall be displayed using text size and color contrast that are clearly identifiable from a reasonable conversational distance. These uniform-identification requirements do not apply to a sworn member working in an undercover capacity, on a covert investigation, or while off duty.
- (c) If an active field emergency or an imminent, demonstrable threat to a member's health or safety requires identification to be temporarily obscured or removed, the deviation is permitted only for the duration of the imminent threat. The sworn member shall document the specific type, context, and duration of the threat in a case report, after-action report, or notes placed in the CAD system. A violation of the face-covering or uniform-identification requirements shall be addressed in accordance with applicable law, the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission uniform policy, and St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office disciplinary procedures. All current and newly sworn members shall receive training regarding these requirements through PowerDMS.
- (d) Members assigned to Plain Clothes or Non-Uniform Assignments who are performing official duties will be in compliance with SMCSO Policy 1023.7(d).
- (e) For detailed requirements and authorized exceptions, see the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office LE Procedures Manual: Face Coverings and Uniform Identification.

1023.4 UNIFORM CLASSES

The Sheriff or the authorized designee shall determine the uniform of the day to be worn by each office member or any deviations that may be authorized. All uniformed employees shall display uniformity in appearance. Failure to wear proper uniform, hat, equipment or other items as designated within this policy will result in administrative action. Uniformed employees will wear the badge, nameplate and rank insignia. If the t-shirt is visible, it must be dark navy blue in color.

Uniforms are classified as follows:

1023.4.1 CLASS A UNIFORM (FORMAL)

The Class A uniform consists of the following:

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- (a) Blouse Jacket (if issued)
- (b) Uniform eight-point hat
- (c) Long-sleeve light blue shirt with issued dark blue necktie
- (d) Tie tack or tie bar
- (e) Issued Uniform Trousers
- (f) Black leather belt with gold buckle
 - 1. Sworn members at the rank of Lieutenant or above may wear an administrative belt.
 - 2. Sworn members at the rank of Sergeant and below should wear a full leather duty belt and shoulder strap (if issued)
- (g) Black socks
- (h) White gloves (color guard only)

1023.4.2 CLASS B UNIFORM

The Class B uniform consists of the following:

- (a) Issued long-sleeve dark blue buttoned-front shirt with a necktie
 - 1. Long-sleeves must be buttoned at the cuff.
 - 2. Metal nameplates, rank insignia and badge will be worn with the Class B Uniform.
- (b) Issued uniform Trousers (dark blue)
- (c) Black leather belt with gold buckle
 - 1. Sworn members at the rank of Lieutenant or above may wear an administrative belt.
 - 2. Sworn members at the rank of Sergeant and below should wear a full leather duty belt.
- (d) Black socks
- (e) Weather appropriate items
 - 1. Uniform Jacket
 - 2. Rain gear

1023.4.3 CLASS C UNIFORM

The Class C uniform consists of the following:

- (a) Issued short-sleeve or long-sleeve dark blue button-front shirt with the collar open and no necktie
 - 1. All shirt buttons must remain buttoned except for the top button at the neck.
 - 2. Metal nameplates, rank insignia and badge will be worn with the Class C Uniform.

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3. To increase visibility and improve officer safety in reduced lighting conditions while outside of their patrol vehicle on the roadway, deputies may roll the sleeve of the Blauer short sleeve uniform shirt one time to expose the reflective striping on the inside of the sleeve.
- (b) Issued Uniform Trousers (dark blue)
- (c) Black leather belt with gold buckle
 1. A nylon belt and/or duty belt may be worn with the Class C uniform if the member transitions into a patrol or enforcement role.
- (d) Black socks
- (e) Weather appropriate items
 1. Issued Ball Cap or Issued Watch Cap
 2. Uniform Jacket
 3. Rain gear

1023.4.4 CLASS D UNIFORM

The Class D uniform consists of the following:

- (a) Issued short-sleeve or long-sleeve dark blue under-carrier shirt with the collar open and no necktie.
 1. Agency-issued under-carrier shirts may be worn only with the outer carrier. Members must be out of the view of the public and conducting administrative duties for the outer carrier to be removed.
- (b) Issued Ripstop Uniform Trousers (dark blue)
- (c) Black leather belt with gold buckle or agency approved nylon belt
- (d) Black socks
- (e) Weather appropriate items
 1. Issued Ball Cap or Issued Watch Cap
 2. Uniform Jacket
 3. Rain gear
- (f) Assignment and Award insignias are not authorized to be worn with the Class D uniform.

1023.4.5 UNIFORM FOOTWEAR

Class A/B Uniform Footwear

- (a) Footwear worn with the Class A/B uniform shall consist of black leather boots, black leather shoes that are capable of being shined or corfram style shoes.
- (b) Boots or shoes shall have a plain or rounded toe and a conservative design.

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- (c) Class A/B footwear shall be polished and maintained to a high standard appropriate for formal duties, court appearances, ceremonies, and public events.
- (d) Restrictions: Tactical-style boots that cannot be adequately polished are not authorized with the Class A uniform.

Class C/D Uniform Footwear

- (a) Footwear worn with the Class C/D uniform shall consist of black duty boots.
- (b) Boots may be traditional leather or leather/nylon blend provided they maintain a professional appearance.
- (c) Boots may include non-polishable finishes when consistent with the operational needs of the assignment.
- (d) While high-gloss polish is not required, footwear shall remain clean, professional in appearance, and well maintained.
- (e) Boots shall cover the ankle and be appropriate for daily patrol or assignment-specific duties.
- (f) Footwear that is primarily athletic in appearance or resembles casual athletic footwear is prohibited.

Specialty Assignments

- (a) Members assigned to specialty units may wear footwear specifically authorized for that assignment, only when scheduled to perform duties within their assigned specialty units. Specialized units include EST, HNT, K9, sUAS, Drone, Bike Patrol, CDU, and Collision Reconstruction.
- (b) Specialty footwear:
 - 1. Must meet safety and operational requirements
 - 2. Must be approved by the Assistant Sheriff.

Medical & Temporary Exceptions

- (a) Temporary deviations from this policy for medical or injury-related reasons may be authorized with appropriate documentation and command approval.
- (b) Any approved exception shall be limited in duration and reviewed periodically.

Compliance & Enforcement

- (a) Supervisors are responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy.
- (b) Failure to adhere to footwear standards may result in corrective action consistent with agency policy.

1023.5 OUTER CARRIER

Every sworn deputy will be issued an outer carrier and when worn, it will contain the issued ballistic panels. Insertion of the rifle plates are optional but strongly encouraged. The outer carrier should be worn with the Class C/D uniform only or when tactically necessary for plain clothes and covert assignments. Nothing will prevent the member from donning the outer carrier for officer safety.

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reasons; including while wearing a class A, B, or C uniform, or when off duty and not in uniform. The member will ensure the outer carrier remains clean and will have the carrier replaced when excessive wear and tear occurs or the dark blue color begins to fade. All pouches and equipment attached to the carrier will be issued or approved by the agency (via a Blue Team Detail Report). The front and back of the carrier will have a "SHERIFF" placard displayed and the Nameplate will consist of the Last Name and ID #. The badge displayed on the carrier will be embroidered with a velcro backing. The rank insignia will be affixed to the center on the front of the carrier.

1023.6 CIVILIAN ATTIRE

There are assignments within the Office that do not require a uniform because recognition and authority are not essential to their functions. There are also assignments for which civilian attire is necessary. This includes attire worn by professional staff and sworn members while on Light Duty or Non-Officer Status. This section of policy does not apply to sworn members operating in a plainclothes or covert assignment.

- (a) Civilian attire shall fit properly, be clean and free of stains, and not damaged or excessively worn.
- (b) Members assigned to administrative, investigative and support positions shall wear business-appropriate clothing that is conservative in style.
 - 1. Certain positions in the Office may have specific uniforms issued for their assignment.
 - 2. Civilian clothing will not contain any logos other than the embroidered Sheriff's badge or the logo of the brand the piece clothing was purchased from. In such cases, the brand logo shall not stand out in color or size.
- (c) Variations from this policy are allowed at the discretion of the Sheriff or the authorized designee when the member's assignment or current task is not conducive to wearing such clothing.
- (d) No item of civilian attire may be worn while on duty that would adversely affect the reputation of the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office or the morale of the members.
- (e) The following items shall not be worn while on -duty or when representing the Office in any official capacity:
 - 1. Clothing that exposes the abdomen (midriff) or an inappropriate amount of cleavage, back, chest, or buttocks
 - 2. Shirts which are frayed/ripped, exposed undergarments, display any outside advertising or graphics which could be perceived as offensive, or political in nature
 - 3. Camouflage patterns are not authorized
 - 4. Swimsuits, tank tops, tube tops or halter tops
 - 5. Sweatshirts, sweatpants or similar exercise clothing, except when participating in an approved training program.

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6. Spandex-type pants or transparent clothing
7. Blue Denim pants, except when expressly allowed by the Sheriff (example: Law Enforcement Torch Run Program)
8. Shorts, skorts, mini-skirts
9. Flip flops (open-toed shoes/sandals) may be acceptable for professional staff if it does not cause a hazard
10. Clothing, buttons or pins displaying racial, sexual, discriminatory, gang-related or obscene language
11. Platform and/or stiletto heels more than 2.5 inches in height, unless part of a prescribed prosthetic, are prohibited.

1023.7 PLAINCLOTHES DEPUTIES

While on duty, deputies in plainclothes assignments shall be dressed in professional business attire that is neat, clean, pressed and properly tailored. Shoes shall be clean and shined.

- (a) The proper attire for male plainclothes deputies shall be:
 1. Suit or sport coat (required for court appearances, alcohol board meetings, etc.) with slacks or trousers;
 2. Dress shirt, tucked in the trousers;
 3. A necktie (optional except for court appearances, alcohol board hearing, etc.);
 4. Dress shoes; no sandals or tennis shoes shall be permitted; and socks shall be worn;
 5. Appropriate business casual attire at the discretion of the Division Commander.
- (b) The proper attire for female plainclothes deputies shall be:
 1. Suit jacket, blazer or sweater (required for court appearances, alcohol board meetings, etc.) with slacks;
 2. Blouses shall be tucked in the slacks;
 3. Shoes shall have low heels and closed toes. No sandals or tennis shoes shall be permitted; and socks or stockings shall be worn;
 4. Appropriate business casual attire at the discretion of the Division Commander.
- (c) Exceptions to this sub-section include deputies assigned to the Criminal Investigations Division, Vice/Narcotics Unit, and Special Operations Division while working a covert assignment, who may be permitted to wear civilian attire as directed and approved by the Division Commander.
- (d) Plainclothes Deputies are required to wear and display their agency-issued identification card that is visible in front of the outer most worn garment, excluding covert deputies or those who may be temporarily operating in a covert assignment.

The agency issued Identification card is to be displayed with either a lanyard or

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retractable belt clip-style device and in a manner that it shall be visible from a normal conversational distance.

(e) Outer Garments and Jackets

1. Agency-issued jackets shall at a minimum display the Sheriff's Office embroidered badge and the identification card attached to a lanyard. Shoulder patches and nameplates will be at the discretion of the Assistant Sheriff.
2. The identification card attached to a lanyard shall be worn on the outside of any Non-Issued Agency jacket.
3. All other outer agency issued garments when worn with plain clothes such as the agency issued rain coat or traffic safety vest shall comply with all applicable statutory requirements that of a sworn uniformed officer.
4. Members shall not wear an outer garment in a manner that covers, conceals, or otherwise prevents the display of identification required by law or this policy.

For procedures related to Plainclothes Deputies, see the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office LE Procedures Manual: [Plain Clothes](#)

1023.8 ALL OTHER SPECIALIZED ASSIGNMENT UNIFORMS

Refer to Procedures 1017.9 for guidance on uniforms for all other specialized assignments.

1023.8.1 OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT

- (a) Any items that are allowed by the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office but that have been identified as optional shall be purchased entirely at the expense of the member. No part of the purchase cost shall be offset by the Office.
- (b) Maintenance and replacement of optional items shall be the financial responsibility of the purchasing member (e.g., repairs due to normal wear and tear).
- (c) Replacement of items listed in this policy as optional shall be managed as follows:
 1. Personal equipment that is no longer in serviceable condition, or that has become worn, frayed, damaged, or otherwise deteriorated, may be required to be replaced. Until such replacement occurs, personnel may be required to utilize the corresponding standard-issued equipment in its place.
- (d) Supervisors may immediately suspend the wearing of optional equipment in instances of abuse.

For procedures related to Optional Equipment, see the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office LE Procedures Manual: Wearing Personal Equipment

1023.8.2 UNAUTHORIZED UNIFORMS, EQUIPMENT AND ACCESSORIES

- (a) St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office members may not wear any uniform item, accessory or attachment unless specifically authorized by the Sheriff or the authorized designee.
- (b) Office members may not use or carry any safety item, tool or other piece of equipment unless specifically authorized by the Sheriff or the authorized designee.

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1023.9 TRAINING EVENTS

For all training events where the employee is not wearing an agency-issued uniform and they are wearing a badge and carrying a handgun; the member shall wear their agency issued identification card and lanyard on the outermost part of their clothing. This applies only when the member is in view of the public and is not required during the training event.