

CHAPTER 1
GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

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UNIFORM DRESS

Introduction

0101. The regulations in this publication supersede the contents of AP 1358 (5th Edition). They apply to officers, non-commissioned ranks serving in the Royal Air Force (RAF) and its ancillary forces and other personnel who are authorised to wear RAF pattern uniform. Orders for the Air Cadet Organisation (ACO) are contained within AP1358C.

Authorised Patterns (QR 194)

0102. The only patterns of dress and insignia to be worn with RAF uniform are those authorised by the Ministry of Defence (Air Force Board Standing Committee (AFBSC)). Patterns and/or specifications for approved items are held by Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S) Clothing. Personnel who obtain items of uniform through trade sources are responsible for ensuring that they conform to the approved patterns. The prescribed patterns are to be adhered to and personnel will be responsible for the cost of replacing or restoring to the approved pattern any articles (including footwear) that they alter without authority or which are so altered as a result of their instructions.

Orders of Dress

0103. Chaps 2, 3, 4 and 6 show illustrations and detail individual 'Orders of Dress'. Guidance on the orders of dress for specific ceremonial and other important occasions is contained in the Annexes to Chap 10.

Scales of Clothing

0104. **JSP 886 Vol 6 Part 5** (to be replaced by Kestrel) lists the entitlement of free-issue clothing to officers on first appointment. **RAF GAI 1022** lists the scales of warm weather clothing prescribed for service outside the UK.

0105. JSP 886 Vol 6 Part 5, details the following scales:

- a. **Scale C101-C104** – lists entitlement to free-issue clothing for non-commissioned ranks.
- b. **Scale C301** – lists the initial outfitting and the supplementary trade and protective clothing items for non-commissioned ranks..

0106. Military outfitters are advised of specification changes by Defence Clothing including full descriptions and purchase instructions for bespoke items.

Outfitting Allowances and Maintenance of Service Clothing

0107. Officers. On initial appointment, officers and officer cadets receive free issues of uniform iaw the current scales as held in the clothing stores. Income tax relief is provided for the maintenance and replacement of officers' uniform items. However, flying, specialist and protective clothing are issued and maintained at public expense.

0108. Non-commissioned Ranks. Initial and replacement issues (iaw the time scales held by Supply Squadron) of airmen's and airwomen's uniform clothing, are free of charge, with the exception of premature replacements occasioned by individual neglect or culpability.

Wearing of Uniform in Public (UK)

0109. The wearing of uniform in public demands the highest standards of dress, bearing and behaviour and Service personnel must be aware that they are effectively representing the Service. A higher public profile for the Service through the wearing of uniform in public should have a positive effect on defence in the public eye. It is therefore incumbent upon all those wearing uniform to be aware that it is their duty not to bring the Service into disrepute as a result of their demeanour or actions, or otherwise to impact adversely on the efficiency or reputation of the Armed Forces.

General

0110. The order of dress on different occasions is set out below:

- a. Uniform is to be worn by all Service personnel while on duty, except when authority to the contrary is given, and on such other occasions as may be ordered.
- b. The type of uniform to be worn by Service personnel is laid down in the following chapters of this AP.
- c. A mix of civilian and military clothing is not to be worn¹.
- d. Ministers and the Chain of Command wish to encourage the greater wearing of uniform in public by Service personnel on or off duty. This approach will require leadership based on the assumption that the default position is that personnel will wear uniform rather than will not. There are however occasions, set out below, where it would not be considered appropriate.
- e. All of the occasions outlined below can be changed at the discretion of local commanders, taking into account, for example, security assessments and appropriate single-Service guidance. Security guidelines for the wearing of uniform in public are promulgated in JSP 440 Defence Manual of Security Part 7 Sect 1 Chap 7.

¹ The exception is when travelling by motorcycle/bicycle when it is accepted that uniform does not provide the necessary protection

0111. Occasions on which uniform should generally be worn:

- a. On duty in the work place.
- b. On duty outside the work place e.g. formal military events, working parties.
- c. Representing the Service e.g. during visits to affiliates.
- d. At events sponsored by Service-related organisations e.g. SSAFA Big Brew and RAFA Wings Collection.
- e. Participating in military parades e.g. Battle of Britain, Remembrance Day, Freedom Parades, and Military/State Funerals.
- f. Participating in Royal events e.g. Royal Garden Parties, Reviews, Parades, Investitures, visits and ceremonial parades for foreign Royalty or Head of State.
- g. On specific occasions designated by the Chain of Command.

0112. Occasions on which the wearing of uniform is encouraged (subject to local commander's direction and including security and threat assessments):

- a. Visits to civilian amenities e.g. bank, garage, shopping, coffee shops.
- b. Travelling from place of duty to place of duty. Uniform should be worn irrespective of the method of travel e.g. public or private transport or on foot.

- c. Travelling to and from residence to place of duty. Uniform may be worn irrespective of the method of travel e.g. public or private transport or on foot.
- d. Travelling to and from leave.
- e. Transiting through civil airports when travelling to and from residence to place of duty, from place of duty to place of duty, and to and from leave.
- f. Service Approved Category 2 Un-established Commitments e.g. official steward duties at Wimbledon.
- g. When deemed appropriate by the Commanding Officer, attending events whilst off duty or on leave e.g. civil or Service wedding, graduation ceremonies.
- h. When deemed appropriate by the Commanding Officer, individuals can wear uniform when attending civilian court as a defendant, witness, or representative of the Service.

0113. Occasions on which uniform is not to be worn:

- a. On leave
- b. Visits to licensed premises (including when not consuming alcohol), except when specifically approved by the Chain of Command.
- c. Representing a third party e.g. part-time employment outside of working hours.

- d. Functions where fancy dress is worn; the wearing of uniform of obsolete design which is clearly distinguishable from the pattern currently worn is, however, permitted.
- e. Carnival processions and other occasions when the reputation or political impartiality of the Armed Forces might be brought into question (e.g. political meetings).
- f. Hitchhiking.

Wearing of Uniform by Airmen/Airwomen after Discharge or Transfer to the Reserve

0114. Non-commissioned ranks are not to wear uniform after their discharge from the Service. The wearing of uniform by reservists is only permissible when called out on permanent service; in aid of the civil power; when undergoing annual or other training; and when otherwise engaged in employment of which it is an express condition, that while employed therein, they are subject to Air Force Law. **See Para 0117** for rules regarding Retired, Reserve and Royal Auxiliary Air Force Officers.

Wearing of Uniform at Private Weddings, Civil Partnership Registrations and Funerals

0115. Subject to CO's approval, personnel may wear No 1 SD at private weddings, civil partnership registrations and funerals. Prior to the event individuals are to check with RAFP or MOD Police regarding the current security situation. **See Para 0116** regarding weddings in foreign countries.

Wearing of Uniform in Foreign Countries

0116. Except when serving with a British Force, RAF personnel are not to wear uniform whilst in a foreign country without having obtained the permission of the Service representative in that country. Such permission will usually be confined to personnel who are employed on duty, or attending Court or State ceremonies to which they have been officially invited. However, exceptionally, and under strict directives given by the appropriate Service Authority, requests to wear uniform for other suitable reasons, such as manoeuvres, weddings, etc, may be submitted for consideration. Such requests are to be referred to Air Command A4 Ceremonial and Policy.

Wearing of Uniform by retired, reserve and Royal Auxiliary Air Force Officers

0117. Occasions when No 1 Service Dress may be worn. Officers on the Retired and Reserve Lists, Royal Auxiliary Air Force officers and ex officers who are permitted to retain their rank may wear uniform on the following occasions:

a. When attending:

- (1) Investitures and Royal Garden Parties.
- (2) State ceremonial occasions.
- (3) Parades *in an official capacity*, in connection with the celebration of the Sovereign's birthday.
- (4) Their own wedding or other military weddings when the sponsor requests the wearing of uniform.
- (5) When attending formal Service functions.

b. When participating *in an official capacity*, in:

- (1) Non-Service parades.
- (2) War Memorial services and associated parades.

c. When inspecting or visiting:

- (1) RAuxAF units *in an official capacity*.
- (2) Units of the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) of the Air Training Corps (ATC) on behalf of the Ministry of Defence or Territorial and Auxiliary Forces Associations.

d. When appointed for service with the ACO (the rank badges to be worn are those appropriate to the ATC appointment).

e. When on duty as officials duly appointed by the Ministry of Defence.

f. When holding the appointments of ADC to Her Majesty's Governor General or Governor.

g. When holding the appointment of Lord Lieutenant or Deputy Lord Lieutenant of a county, High Sheriff or Sheriff and discharging the duties of that appointment. (Lieutenancy insignia may not be worn on RAF dress but entitled RAF flying badges may be worn on the Lieutenancy dress).

Wearing the Uniform of Voluntary Organisations. ([QR J200](#))

0118. Service personnel may wear the uniform of non-political voluntary organisations (e.g. St. John's Ambulance Brigade, the Salvation Army, and the Scouts, etc) on appropriate occasions provided there is no interference with Service duties and obligations but they may not wear the uniform of political organisations.

Dress for Station Duty Personnel

0119. Dress for station duty personnel, e.g. Station Duty Officer, Orderly Officer etc, should be published by commanding officers in accordance with command policy. Whilst the wearing of No 1 Service Dress (No 1 SD) is usually to be reserved for ceremonial and formal occasions, local commanders may authorise its use by duty personnel when they consider this to be appropriate.

Name Badges

0120. Officers are to wear name badges, except on ceremonial occasions, on No 1 SD, No 6 SD and on No 2 SD when the jersey is worn. The badge is to be of blue plastic and is to be worn centrally above the right breast pocket of the jacket or horizontally just below the right shoulder of the jersey. Personnel employed on recruiting, instructional duties and aircrew in overseas appointments are to wear similar badges in the same manner.

Dress for Passengers – Air and Sea Travel

0121. Dress regulations for air and sea travel will be dependant upon travel method, destination and/or type of operation/move. Dress requirements will normally be as detailed in [JSP 800 Vol 2](#), Passenger Travel Instructions, Part 2, Chap 15 or individual theatre travel instructions

Dress for Equerries and ADC's

0122. As appropriate to their ranks and the occasion, Service uniform may be worn by RAF officers, appointed as equerries to the Sovereign or other members of the Royal Family or as ADC to a Governor-General, Commissioner-General etc, (as listed in the table of aiguillette entitlements at **Chap 9**).

Personnel on Loan Service or Secondment

0123. RAF uniform is to be worn by personnel on loan service or secondment to other forces unless otherwise stipulated in the memoranda governing their appointments. Personnel of other forces on loan service or secondment to the Royal Air Force are to wear the uniform of their services on all appropriate occasions.

Dress When off Duty and For Social and Sporting Events

0124. All RAF personnel at home units should normally wear civilian clothes when they are not required for duty. However, officers, WOs and SNCOs wear uniform on the following occasions.

a. At formal functions in an Officers' Mess, WOs' & Sergeants' Mess or Junior Ranks' Club, when the appropriate form of dress is No 1, 4 or 5 SD uniforms and, when overseas, the warm-weather dress equivalents. When attending an informal function in any of these Messes, officers and SNCOs are to wear suitable or civilian dress as detailed in Mess Dress Regulations.

b. At inter-Service boxing tournaments No 5 or 8 Mess Dress is normally worn. Dress at RAF boxing tournaments is to be at the discretion of the Commander-in-Chief of the host station.

0125. Notwithstanding the above, COs have the discretionary power to order that uniform be worn on particular off-duty occasions, should they consider it appropriate.

Wearing of Head-dress

0126. When wearing uniform outdoors, on or off base, headdress is to be worn by all personnel in the following manner:

a. No 1 SD Hat. The No 1 SD hat is to be worn so that the bottom of the hat is 25mm above the eyebrows, the front of the hat level and the badge positioned centrally. The chinstrap is to be taut and positioned to cover the blue seam between the hatband and peak. RAF Police personnel of the rank of WO and below wear a white-topped SD Hat when wearing all variations of No 1 or No 2 SD. The No 1 SD hat is never worn with CS 95.

b. Field Service Cap. The field service cap, which is an optional extra at own expense, is worn tilted to the right so that that front edge is approximately 25mm above the eyebrows and the side edge is approximately 12mm above the right ear. The material is blue/grey worsted barathia of standard styling for wg cdrs and below; for gp cpts and air officers the cap is piped in Minerva blue. Officers of 2* rank and above only may elect to wear the FSC with combat dress.

c. Beret. The beret is to be worn so that the black band is horizontal around the head and 25mm above the eyebrows. The surplus material is to be pulled down over the right ear and the badge clearly displayed in a position directly above the left eye. The adjustment ribbon is to be secured with a knot and the surplus ends hidden from sight.

d. Turbans. Officers and airmen of Sikh religion may wear turbans of the approved Service pattern and colour, instead of uniform headdress. The appropriate cap badge is to be fitted centrally on the turban with its base at the apex of the triangle of the headband. When necessary to wear specialist headgear such as combat helmets or flying helmets the turban has to be removed and the patka (mini turban) may be worn.

e. **Hijabs.** Muslim females may wear Hijabs of the approved pattern and colour (plain black) under their uniform headdress except when operational, training or health and safety considerations dictate otherwise. It is worn without cap badge under the hat outdoors and without hat indoors. The hijab is to be worn in such a way that rank slides are visible at all times.

0127. Hats need not be worn: ([QR 202](#))

a. When indoors at designated place of work.

b. When in FOD hazard areas.

c. When serving detention.

d. When otherwise ordered.

e. When engaged on PEd instructional duties (PTIs only).

f. When attending a church service (female personnel excepted).

g. Male personnel, other than members of the Jewish faith or of other religions which require the head to be covered on solemn occasions, when in civil or Service courts and when taking oaths, are to have the head uncovered whenever they take oaths. (See AP 3265 – Guide to Legal Procedures).

h. Additionally, except when on duty under arms, Service personnel in civil courts are not to wear their headdress while the judge or magistrate is present.

Wearing of Personal Protective Equipment with Uniform

0128. Personal Protective Equipment can be worn with uniform in the following circumstances:

a. **Motorbike and Bicycle Crash Helmets.** When riding motorbikes, personnel are to conform to the law, in or out of uniform and, with the exception of Sikhs wearing turbans, wear approved civilian pattern crash helmets when riding motorbikes. Personnel may wear cycle helmets when riding bicycles. When in uniform, the headdress appropriate to the uniform worn is to be carried and, once alighted from the motorbike or bicycle, is to replace the crash/cycle helmet before proceeding on foot away from the parked motorbike or bicycle. Similarly, uniform headdress is worn up until the point of return back to the motorbike or bicycle before replacing with the crash/cycle helmet. When riding motorcycles or bicycles the mixing of uniform and civilian dress is forbidden with the exception of protective headgear; either full uniform or full civilian dress is to be worn.

- b. **Reflective Belts.** The Reflective Belt can be worn around the waist over the outer clothing layer with normal working dress (No 2 SD and No 7 SD) and other specialist working uniforms (e.g. combat uniform, flying clothing, PTI, etc).

Use of the belt is not centrally mandated, and can be used by individuals at their own discretion. The majority of use is expected for those travelling to and from work in the hours of darkness, where their use is encouraged for pedestrians or cyclists. However, they are NOT a substitute for Hi-Viz vests and jackets that are worn in defined hazard areas (e.g. ac manoeuvring areas, ac loading/unloading, ac maintenance, MT yards, Gate Guards and VCPs, Marching Troops, etc).

Walking and pace sticks

0129. Only the following personnel are permitted to carry walking and pace sticks in the performance of their duties:

- a. Chief of the Air Staff's Warrant Officer (Rosewood finish).
- b. Station Warrant Officers (Plain Black finish).
- c. Command Warrant Officer Reserves, **Corps Warrant Officer RAF Regt and Provost Marshall's Warrant Officer (Ash finish).**
- d. Pace sticks – by NCO drill instructors actively engaged on drill instructional duties.

With the exception of CASWO and those listed at 'c', walking sticks are only to be used at individual's parent units. Only sticks of the approved pattern are to be used. The pace stick is not to be altered or defaced in any way that results in a deviation from the original pattern but it can be stained either rosewood or light mahogany.

Blue sashes

0130. Blue Waist Sash. The following personnel are authorised to wear the blue waist sash on the occasions shown:

- a. Officers employed as HM the Queen's Gentlemen Ushers.
- b. All ranks when employed on AFB ushering duties at the direction of SO1 RAF Ceremonial.

0131. Blue Shoulder Sash. The following personnel are authorised to wear the blue shoulder sash on the occasions shown:

- a. WOs and SNCOs of The Queens Colour Squadron when on parade.
- b. Station WOs on ceremonial and representative duties, when deemed appropriate by the event sponsor.

- c. IOT and recruit training instructors at established recruit or trade training establishments. It is only to be worn whilst on parade.
- d. WOs and SNCO escorts to Queens Colours and Squadron standards.

Sunglasses

0132. Occasions for Wear. Epidemiological evidence exists which links sunlight exposure to certain eye diseases. Where the line manager is aware of a hazard to health through exposure to sunlight, as a consequence of duty, an individual may be permitted to wear Service issue or suitably styled civilian purchased UV blocking sunglasses as follows:

- a. **Aircrew.** Aircrew engaged in flying duties are to adhere to current flying safety regulations. On all other occasions they are to adhere to the rules below.
- b. **Ground Personnel.** On health and safety grounds, Service issue or suitable civilian purchased sunglasses may be worn with uniform, outdoors, both in UK and overseas. For similar reasons, personnel employed on Service duties such as air traffic control, driving and guard duty, etc, may wear sunglasses.
- c. **Medically Prescribed Tinted Spectacle and Sunglasses.** Non-Service issue prescription tinted spectacles or sunglasses, prescribed for health reasons, may be worn with uniform at all times either in the UK or overseas. However, in style and colour, they are to accord with the instructions detailed in Para 0131, b, below.
- d. **Parades.** Non-prescription sunglasses are not to be worn on parade or other formal occasions unless specifically authorised.

0133. Authorised Patterns. Only the following pattern of sunglasses are authorised for wear with uniform:

- a. **Service Issue Sunglasses.** All personnel posted or detached to a warm weather clothing area are entitled to one pair of Service issue sunglasses; these are available through the normal supply chain.
- b. **Civilian Glasses and Sunglasses.** Civilian glasses or sunglasses of a plain sober pattern may be worn with uniform. They are to be unobtrusive in style and neither eccentric nor “eye catching”. Frames are to be of standard style and colour; bright or multi-coloured frames are not permitted. Sunglasses are not to be mirrored and are to be of a dark colour similar to the Service issue. The commanding officer shall be the arbiter upon what is an acceptable colour or style.

Temporary/National Emblems

0134. No unauthorised ornament or emblem is to be worn with uniform. The following exceptions are permitted:

a. Poppies. The Royal British Legion Poppy may be worn from the onset of sales and until the National and local observations have concluded. Only the conventional paper poppy is to be worn on ceremonial dress and on parades (with the exception of personnel on ceremonial duties at The Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday). The paper poppy may be removed at the discretion of a parade commander where it is possible for it to be inadvertently dislodged by arms drill. On working dress and combat uniform, subject to working environment (such as FOD risks), a plain enamel poppy badge of dimensions not exceeding 2.5cm (1") may be worn as described in para 0135. The plain enamel badge may be worn with Mess dress at the discretion of the PMC or CMC accordingly. Only one poppy, paper or enamel, is to be worn on the outermost garment. Poppies are not to be affixed to head dress.

b. The national flower or emblem on St George's, St Andrew's, St David's and St Patrick's Day, according to nationality; NOT to be worn on parade.

0135. Emblems should be of conventional dimensions and are to be worn immediately above the right breast pocket of the No 1 SD jacket and in the corresponding position on warm-weather dresses, jerseys and combat uniform. When worn with the greatcoat it is to be worn on the left lapel. In order to avoid damaging the waterproof materials, emblems are not to be worn on wet weather outerwear.

Duty Armllets

0136. Identifying armllets, used by personnel in the performance of designated station duties, are to be worn on the left sleeve, positioned midway between the elbow and the shoulder. **(See Chap 7)**

Mourning Bands ([QR J196](#))

0137. Royal mourning (previously known as Court Mourning) is not generally observed by the armed forces. With the exception of private mourning (see (g) below) only officers and WOs are to wear mourning bands. During periods for which national mourning (previously known as Service Mourning) is ordered ([QR J172](#)), they are to wear bands, only in the following orders of dress and on the occasions listed below. A mourning band is a piece of black crepe 3¼ inches wide. It is worn on the left sleeve, positioned so that the bottom of the band lies two inches above the elbow. Identifying armllets worn at the same time as mourning are to be worn on the right sleeve.

a. A mourning band will only ever be worn in parade uniform where there is a jacket.

b. Unless otherwise indicated by the family, officers attending Service funerals in uniform are to wear a mourning band. Officers on duty at these events will also wear mourning bands, whether in the procession, acting as ushers, or in another capacity. These rules apply to officers attending associated memorial services held on the same day.

- c. Officers who wear plain clothes on duty during a period of National mourning are recommended to wear black ties.
- d. WOs attending Service funerals in uniform, or acting as ushers are to wear mourning bands. They are not to wear them if they are on duty in the procession (including bearer parties), lining the route or elsewhere. These rules apply to WOs attending associated memorial services held on the same day.
- e. Mourning bands are not to be worn at any other memorial services or other ceremonies such as the unveiling of memorials and Remembrance services.
- f. When ordered by a Commanding Officer, for example following the death of a member of the unit, or at reception ceremonies related to the repatriation of a body or remains, mourning bands are to be worn by officers and WOs only, and in accordance with the instructions at (a)-(d) above. Bearer parties are not to wear mourning bands.
- g. When, exceptionally, Service personnel wear uniform in private mourning (for example at a family funeral) they may wear a mourning band if so desired. This is the only occasion on which Service personnel below the rank of WO may wear mourning bands.
- h. Mourning bands are not to be worn at Court unless the Court is in mourning. (See also QR J173 on Royal Mourning).

0138. The Ministry of Defence will issue instructions for the observation of National mourning. Mourning bands are “pooled items” and may be demanded through unit clothing stores. Any queries or questions on mourning rulings should be referred to Air Command A4 Ceremonial and Policy.

Female Hosiery

0139. The approved uniform dress hose colour is as follows:

- a. **In UK.** Nearly black stockings or tights are to be worn with the No 2 SD skirt. When on parade in No 1 SD Skirt, 15 Denier – nearly Black stockings or tights are to be worn. Black issue socks are worn with No 1 SD and No 2 SD trousers.
- b. **Warm Weather Areas.** Beige hosiery is to be worn with No 6 SD (KD) skirts and frocks. When wearing blue uniform the rules above apply.

Optional Dress Items

0140. Umbrellas. Personal umbrellas may be carried for use by all personnel whilst in uniform, except when on parade or participating in other ceremonial occasions. They are to be plain black with an inconspicuous handle.

0141. Cufflinks. Cufflinks prescribed for officers and WOs with formal orders of dress are to be plain gold or have similar appearance. WOs and SNCOs may also wear cuff links of this specification with the No 5 and optional version of the No 8 dress. Service related cufflinks (for example, the RAF Benevolent Fund heart roundel) may be worn by all ranks with No2A dress subject to local commander's discretion.

0142. Gloves.

a. Officers & WOs. Regardless of season, officers and WOs are to wear brown leather gloves on the following occasions:

(1) On all parades in No 1 SD (except when swords are carried).

(2) When ordered on ceremonial and other formal occasions.

Additionally, brown gloves may be worn or carried when in No 1 SD (unconnected with ceremonial) or working dress.

b. Flight Sergeants & Below. Personnel of flight sergeant rank and below may wear official pattern black leather gloves when ordered on ceremonial and other formal occasions. Additionally, black leather gloves may be worn or carried when in No 1 dress (unconnected with ceremonial) and working dress.

0143. Stable Belts/Female Money Belts (Optional Extras). The only recognised stable belts permitted for wear with uniform are the RAF, the RAF Regt and RAFP stable belts. All styles of belt are optional extras, available for male and female, and purchased at private expense. Additionally, females may continue to wear the approved 'optional' blue woven money (purse) belt. Unless otherwise ordered, stable belts or female money belts may only be worn with No 2A, 2B, 7A and 7B SD only. Stable belts may be worn with No3 combat uniform, but only as "barrack wear", when in the field it is not to be worn. Stable belts and money belts are not to be worn outside of jerseys or jackets at any time.

0144. Handbags, Brief Cases, Rucksacks, Sports Bags and Holdalls.

a. Handbags. Except on parade and when in operational clothing female personnel may carry Service-issue handbags when wearing all other forms of uniform. They are to be carried either over the left shoulder with the adjustable strap fully extended, or in the left hand if the strap is shortened by means of the press-studs.

b. Brief Cases / Laptop Bags. Brief cases and laptop bags may be used, but they are to be of plain dark colour. They are to be carried in manner to permit the paying of compliments when necessary.

c. Rucksacks, Sports Bags & Holdalls. The Service issue blue RAF Rucksack is the only non-specialist sports bag of this range permitted for use when in uniform. The rucksack is to be carried in such a manner as to facilitate the paying and receiving of compliments.

0145. RAF Sports Representative Blazer. Only personnel who have represented the RAF at home, in officially recognised senior inter-Service championships against the Royal Navy or the Army are eligible to wear the RAF sports representative blazer, badge and tie. Certificates authorising their wear are issued by the Defence Sports Board (RAF). The RAF sports representative blazer is single-breasted, made of dark blue wool flannel, with three large buttons on the front and three small buttons on each cuff. The buttons are identical to those worn on the RAF officers No 5 Mess Dress jacket. Woven replicas of the sports representative badge are worn on the breast pocket.

0146. RAF General Blazer. The general blazer may be worn by all serving and ex-members of the Royal Air Force and its ancillary services. It is double-breasted, made of dark blue wool flannel, with four large buttons on the front and three small buttons on each cuff. The buttons are chromium plated and indented with an eagle and crown. Buttons for the non-regular forces are further indented below the eagle and crown with the letters RAuxAF or RAFVR(T) as appropriate. Entitled personnel may wear a command or formation badge positioned on the breast pocket.

0147. Boots and Overshoes. Except when on parade, in heavy rain, snow or icy conditions personnel may wear issue combat boots, overshoes or wellingtons with uniform. The footwear is to be plain black with a heel not exceeding 37mm. They are to be made of rubber, leather or plastic and extend no higher than the base of the knee. This form of footwear is only permitted for outside wear, standard issue footwear is to be worn inside.

0148. Scarves. Except when on parade a plain black scarf may be worn with No 2 uniform outer garments. The scarf is to be folded so that no more than 2.5cm (1") is visible above the neck of the outer garment.

0149. Ball gowns. At the discretion of the CO, delegated down to PMC or CMC as appropriate, female officers, WOs and SNCOs may wear ball gowns at Officers' Mess and Sgts' Mess annual formal balls and Ladies guest nights.

Inspections of Kit. ([QR212](#))

0150. A CO is responsible for the standard of dress of all airmen under his command and may order inspections of Service issue items of kit whenever necessary for the maintenance of a satisfactory standard. Additionally, the Service issue items of kit of all airmen below the rank of sergeant are to be inspected prior to their departure overseas on posting or operational detachment.

APPEARANCE

Growth of Hair and Beards - Male Personnel. ([QR209 & 210](#)).

0151. Hair. The hair of the head is to be well cut and trimmed. Sideburns are to be short and well trimmed and are not to extend below a line running through the mid point of the ear. Extreme styles of haircuts and colouring are not permitted. If the hair is dyed or highlighted, the colour chosen is to be natural and in a uniform shade appropriate to the individual. The commanding officer shall be the arbiter upon what is or not an acceptable style or length of cut.

a. Rastafarians. Male Rastafarian hair is to follow the same general rules for other Service personnel in that it is to be neat and tidy and not of an exaggerated nature. Dreadlocks are to be no longer than the collar and able to be worn with all types of military headdress in such a way that is compatible with the image of the Royal Air Force.

0152. Beards. Male personnel are to be clean-shaven when in uniform. Beards may only be permitted on religious grounds or when specially authorised by COs on medical grounds under the provisions of AP1269. The beard is to be a full one and it is to be kept short and neatly trimmed. Muslim personnel may wear short neatly trimmed beards. Sikh personnel may wear their hair long in the Sikh tradition, the hair of the head is to be so arranged that it is placed under the turban. For occupational or operational reasons, where a hazard clearly exists, personnel authorised to wear beards on religious or medical grounds may be ordered to modify or remove facial hair to such an extent as to enable the correct wearing of respirator or breathing apparatus. However, during routine NBC training or Stn exercises the beard may remain unshaven.

0153. Moustaches. If a moustache is worn, the upper lip is to be unshaven and the moustache is not to extend below the edge of the mouth.

Hairdressing and Cosmetics - Female Personnel.

0154. Female personnel are to arrange their hair in a manner that permits Service Dress cap to be worn correctly; hair is not to show under the front or peak of the cap and the style is to be kept neat and no longer than the bottom edge of the collar at the back of the Service jacket. PMRAFNS personnel are to wear their hair off the collar when engaged in nursing duties. Extreme styles of haircuts and colouring are not permitted, if the hair is dyed or highlighted, the colour chosen is to be natural and in a uniform shade appropriate to the individual. The commanding officer shall be the arbiter upon what is or not an acceptable style or length of cut. Narrow fabric covered hair bands (scrunches) may be worn with working dress, but must be inconspicuous and either of a similar colour to the hair or black. Hair bands are not to be worn on parade. Combs, when worn, must be plain and of a similar colour to the wearer's hair. Exceptionally, when required on tasks or training which require them to wear respirators or other similar safety equipment, females with long hair may wear their hair in a ponytail if this facilitates safe fitting of such items. When the need to wear this equipment has passed, the hair must be put up.

a. Rastafarians. Female Rastafarian hair is to follow the same rules for other female personnel.

0155. In addition to the provisions of Para 0152, female aircrew that are required to wear flying helmets or aircrew respirators for the performance of their aircrew duties are to wear their hair in a manner which:

- a. Is sufficiently short that the fit and stability of their flying helmet or aircrew respirator is not compromised.
- b. Allows the hair to fit completely and comfortably inside their flying helmet or aircrew respirator without the use of hairpins, clips or other hair-restraining device that might constitute an operational or flight safety hazard.

0156. Nail Varnish & Cosmetics. When in uniform female personnel are forbidden to use brightly coloured nail varnish and cosmetics of a conspicuous nature. Mixed nail colours and non-traditional colours such as blue, green, silver, black etc, are not permitted. The commanding officer shall be the arbiter upon what is or not an acceptable colour. Nursing staffs are forbidden to use nail varnish of any kind when on ward duty. Female aircrew are forbidden to wear cosmetics of any kind when performing flying duties that require the use of oxygen masks or aircrew respirators.

Wearing of Trinkets & Jewellery.

0157. Males. In the case of male personnel, the wearing of watch-chains and trinkets in such a manner as to be seen is not permitted when wearing uniform. A wedding ring and/or one other plain signet or precious metal ring may be worn. A watch of inconspicuous style may also be worn. Thumb rings are not permitted. Earrings are not to be worn. **Cosmetics, including nail varnish, are not to be worn by male personnel.**

0158. Females. The prohibition in Para 0157 is equally applied to female personnel who are similarly forbidden to wear jewellery when in uniform. They may, however wear a wedding and/or engagement ring plus one other plain metal ring. Thumb rings are not permitted. A watch of inconspicuous style may also be worn. Additionally, if ears are pierced, one small, unobtrusive plain yellow gold spherical stud earring may be worn in each ear lobe at all times except when on parade.

0159. Charity Wristbands. Policy regarding the wearing of official service charity wristbands is reviewed annually. Personnel may wear one service charity wristband when in No2 or No3 dress variants. Wristbands are not to be worn with formal orders of dress. The commanding officer shall be the arbiter upon what is or not an appropriate environment or occasion to wear charity wristbands.

Body Piercing.

0160. All Personnel. Where any part of the body, other than the ear lobe for women, has been pierced or prepared, whether for any ring, stud or sleeper, no such items are to be worn when on duty or standby duty. Similarly, when not in uniform but on duty, standby duty or representing the RAF, the wearing of body piercing jewellery, trinkets or rings etc is not permitted, nor at any time when it may be seen to hold the Service in disrepute or adversely reflect upon the RAF. This ruling includes tongue studs.

Tattooing – General Guidance (AP3392 Vol 5)

0161. The Royal Air Force require personnel to present a high standard of appearance when on and off duty irrespective of the fashions prevailing amongst the civilian population. Personnel are not permitted to have any tattoos or henna style markings that are that are above the neck collar, on the hands and wrists or on the ankles in such a manner as to be visible in No 1 HD.

0162. Tattooing is to be discouraged, and unacceptable tattoos or henna markings, whether ordinarily visible or not are not permitted. Such tattoos are defined as being any tattoo(s), excessive in size or number, obscene or offensive (e.g. racist, profane, blasphemous, anti-Semitic, overtly sexist, homophobic, drugs-related or of an extreme political nature).

0163. Detailed rulings and administrative instructions on tattooing are contained in AP 3392 Vol 5 which is the definitive document for the RAF policy on tattooing.