

**ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES**

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| **30.08 Uniform Program** | **Revised: November 1, 2023** |

1. ELIGIBILITY TO WEAR UNIFORMS

This procedure applies to all budgeted employees and certain seasonal employees (approved by applicable associate director). Program delivery staff in field offices are required to wear the agency standard uniform as they have significant, frequent or recurring contact with the general public. Administrative support staff in field offices and staff working in administrative offices may wear the standard uniform, business casual uniform or other business attire.

2. UNIFORM ELEMENTS – HUMAN TECHNOLOGIES CORPORATION (HTC)

HTC is the uniform vendor for the Texas A&M Forest Service. All uniform items available to agency employees are provided at the Uniforms link on the agency Staff Resources webpage.

2.1 Standard Uniform

1. The standard uniform consists of a light olive shirt and green uniform pants (four styles). The shirt has an agency shoulder patch sewn on the left sleeve one inch below the shoulder seam. This shirt is preferred when it is important to establish authority. Other uniform items include jackets, socks, ties, belts and hats.
2. A gold nameplate is worn on the right shirt pocket flap of the light olive uniform shirt only. The employee’s official title must be used on the nameplate. Exceptions must be approved by the applicable associate director. Nicknames are generally not allowed on the nameplate; however, exceptions may be approved by the applicable associate director. The Agency Uniform Coordinator will communicate approved nicknames to the uniform vendor.
3. Fieldwork is performed in the standard uniform, not business casual attire.

2.2 Law Enforcement Uniform

1. The law enforcement (LE) uniform is only available to approved agency LE personnel.
2. The standard LE uniform consists of a green LE uniform shirt and the standard green uniform cargo pants. The uniform and polo shirts have an agency shoulder patch sewn on both the left and right sleeves one inch below the shoulder seam. Other LE uniform items include jacket, socks, ties, belts and hats.
3. A silver nameplate is worn on the right shirt pocket flap, and the agency badge is worn above the left shirt pocket. A western hat or a black agency LE cap may be worn with the LE uniform. The green outer carrier should be worn with the LE uniform when appropriate.

2.3 Business Casual Uniform

1. Business casual uniform items may be worn to meetings or events where business casual is the appropriate attire.
2. Business casual uniform items include polo, twill and denim shirts. These shirts have the agency logo over the left pocket and are **not** worn with a nameplate. The shirts may be worn with the green uniform pants (all four styles), black LE uniform trousers or casual slacks.
3. Other uniform elements (jackets, belts, etc.) may be worn with business casual uniform items.
4. Mourning Indicator pins may be worn with the business casual uniform. Mourning Indicator pins are an approved standard indicator of morning that can be worn for a single event, such as a memorial or funeral service, or up to one week.

3. OTHER UNIFORM ELEMENTS

The following authorized uniform elements are not available through the uniform vendor:

3.1 Unit T-Shirts

The agency has authorized unit t-shirts in support of team-building efforts, subject to the following requirements and restrictions:

1. No agency funds may be expended for the t-shirts. Employees will have to purchase these shirts using personal funds.
2. Units desiring a unit t-shirt must obtain approval for the t-shirt and the design from the applicable department head and associate director prior to ordering them. Unit t-shirts may not have the agency name or logo on them.
3. The requirements for wearing an agency uniform in public places must be strictly adhered to (see Section 6.6).
4. Unit t-shirts may only be worn while working in a shop, on an out-of-state emergency response incident, in an office during the evening or weekend when the office is closed to the public or in the field when the general public is not present.
5. Unit t-shirt colors are limited to brown, tan or black.

Failure to adhere to the above requirements and restrictions will result in elimination of the authorization for unit t-shirts.

3.2 Uniform Boots

1. Employees needing uniform boots may purchase them from a vendor of their choice and be reimbursed for up to $300 of the cost (including shipping charges) from their uniform allowance (see Section 9 for reimbursement process).

b. The boots must meet the following minimum specifications:

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| **Work Boot** | **Wildland Fire Boot** |
| 6” High  Lace-up  Welt construction  Predominantly dark brown all leather (or man-made material) upper w/black outer sole | Minimum 8” high  Lace-up  All leather upper  Vibram-type, melt resistant sole  No steel toe  No zipper  No nylon  No insulation |

c. Employees may have their wildland fire boots resoled or rebuilt by the manufacturer to extend their useful life and may be reimbursed up to $300 of the cost (including shipping charges) from their uniform allowance (see Section 9 for reimbursement process). Resoling or rebuilding wildland fire boots may only be done by the boot manufacturer to be eligible for reimbursement.

1. Reimbursements for uniform boots (purchase of new or resoled/rebuilt) under the uniform allowance is limited to once every three years.

4. UNIFORM ELEMENTS – K&L ADVERTISING SPECIALTIES

Additional business casual uniform items are available for employees to purchase at personal expense through K&L Advertising Specialties in College Station. All approved items available to employees are provided at the link under Business Casual Items (K&L) on the agency Staff Resources webpage.

4.1 Business casual uniform items are **not** worn with the uniform nameplate. The shirts and caps may be worn with the green uniform pants (all four styles), the black LE uniform trousers, or with casual slacks. Additionally, the business casual caps may not be worn with the standard uniform or the LE uniform (see Section 6.5).

4.2 Employees may purchase with personal funds business casual items from K&L and be reimbursed for up to $100 of the cost (including shipping charges) from their uniform allowance (see Section 9 for reimbursement process).

5. CHANGES TO UNIFORM ELEMENTS

5.1 Requests to change or add a uniform element should be submitted by e-mail to the Agency Uniform Coordinator. This request should clearly state what change (i.e., modification or addition) is requested and the reason for the request.

5.2 The Agency Uniform Coordinator routes each request for executive level review and decision, communicates the decision to the requestor, coordinates the approved changes with the uniform vendor, and notifies uniform holders of the changes.

6. WEARING THE UNIFORM

6.1 **Professional Image:** An employee wearing an agency uniform represents the agency and is responsible for presenting a professional image. This may include ironing the poly-cotton field shirts with light starch after laundering and personally purchasing additional uniform items to maintain the integrity of the uniforms and the appropriate professional image.

6.2 **Off Duty:** Uniform elements (including business casual uniform items with the agency logo) should not be worn during off-duty periods. They also should not be worn when an activity requires more formal or casual attire than presented by the uniform. Worn-out, dirty, wrinkled or otherwise unacceptable uniform items should not be worn.

6.3 **Non-Uniform Items:** Only items specifically authorized in these procedures may be worn with the standard uniform, unless required to address safety issues or to maintain an appropriate appearance. No standard uniform element that has an agency patch may be worn with non-uniform jeans.

6.4 **Modifications:**  The agency uniform cannot be modified in any way. No additional non-agency embroidery or patches are allowed. Employees may not attach agency patches to any other clothing items.

6.5 **Hats:** An employee may wear an agency uniform cap or a broad brimmed hat with the standard uniform to protect from over-exposure to the sun. Approved hats are available from the agency uniform vendor. In addition, an employee may wear a plain western hat (with no embellishments). No other hats are allowed.

6.6 **Public Places:** An employee with a full uniform allowance is required to wear the uniform when working in public places or when dealing with the public. An agency office is considered a public place. An employee working in a shop, on an out-of-state emergency response incident, in an office during the evening or weekend when the office is not open to the public, or in the field where members of the public are not present, may wear a uniform t-shirt or uniform hoodie to avoid damage to the regular uniform shirt; however, the regular uniform shirt must be worn when returning to a public place.

6.7 **Pins:** Only pins approved by the Director may be worn with the agency uniform. The pins must be worn on the left pocket flap of the standard uniform shirt and no more than two pins may be worn at a time. Mourning Indicator pins are approved as a standard indicator of morning that can be worn for a single event, such as a memorial or funeral service, or up to one week.

6.8 **PPE:** An employee may wear the green Nomex/Kevlar pants with the standard uniform shirt when fire activity levels warrant wearing the Nomex/Kevlar pants to be ready for response. All employees must wear full Nomex (shirt and pants) when working on the fire line. An employee may not wear any uniform item over or in place of PPE while on the fire line.

6.9 **Enforcement:** Failure to follow these guidelines or the inappropriate use of the agency uniform can result in the loss of the uniform allowance, loss of the privilege to wear uniforms or other disciplinary action. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that subordinates wear the proper uniform attire and that uniforms are properly maintained.

7. UNIFORM ALLOWANCE

7.1 **Full Allowance:** Employees required to wear the agency uniform on a daily basis will receive a full allowance ($550 the first year and $300 each succeeding year) of funds each fiscal year for the purchase of uniform items from the uniform vendor.

7.2 **Partial Allowance:** Employees required to wear the agency uniform on an occasional basis will receive a partial allowance ($266 the first year and $145 each succeeding year) of funds each fiscal year or any appropriate alternate amount determined by the applicable associate director.

7.3 **No Allowance:**  Employees not required to wear the agency uniform will not receive a uniform allowance.

7.4 **Carryforward Balances:** Employees are allowed to carry forward up to $100 of any unexpended uniform allowance from one fiscal year to the next.

7.5 **Balance Transfers:** An employee’s uniform allowance may not be transferred to another employee and may not be used to purchase uniform items for any other person.

8. ADMINISTRATION OF STANDARD UNIFORM

8.1 Employee Responsibilities

1. **Placing Orders:** Submit uniform orders to the uniform vendor through the uniform website. If an order exceeds account balance, select another payment option (money order, check or personal credit card) for the overage. **An agency credit card may not be used to pay the overage.** Upon completion of the order, print and retain a copy of the internet order confirmation.
2. **Receiving Orders:**  Upon receipt of order, verify the items are correct and sizing is appropriate. If there is an issue with an item, identify the order number, order date, item description, problem description and desired resolution, and do the following:

(1) Contact the uniform vendor promptly. Document the communication with the uniform vendor, including the name of person contacted, date and time of the communication, and the specifics related to the vendor response. Retain the communication record until the issue is fully resolved.

(2) If unable to resolve the issue with the uniform vendor, ask the Agency Uniform Coordinator for assistance.

c. **Order History and Account Balances:**  Employees may access their order history and allowance balance on the uniform website.

d. **Office Location Changes:** Employees are responsible for updating their shipping address under the My Profile section of the uniform website when they have a change in office location. The shipping address should be the physical office address, not a post office box or home address.

8.2 Supervisor Responsibilities

1. **Allowances:** Prepare and approve the [Uniform Allowance Authorization](http://tfsfinance.tamu.edu/modules/finance/admin/procedures/Uniform%20Allowance%20Authorization.docx) form to establish an allowance for a new hire or to change the allowance for an existing employee, and send it to the Agency Uniform Coordinator.
2. **Terminations:** Collect uniform patches, nameplates and caps from terminating employees at the time they terminate. Terminating employees have the option to turn in their uniforms or keep them. If uniforms are kept by the employee, all agency patches must be removed and turned in.

8.3 Agency Uniform Coordinator Responsibilities

a. **Uniform Allowances:** Complete the authorization data, set up the uniform account with the uniform vendor, update the master list of uniform allowance authorizations, and notify employee when account is set up.

b. **Year-end Carryforward Balances:** Verify and correct the allowable carryforward balances and the following year’s allowances on the end-of-year allowance balance report; submit corrected report to the uniform vendor. Create the new fiscal year master list of uniform allowance authorizations.

c. **Program Records:** Maintain file of Uniform Allowance Authorization forms, master list of uniform authorizations, and copies of the year-end reports.

d. **Uniform changes:** Process all requested uniform element changes (see Section 5).

e. **Problem Resolution:** Assist employees with problem resolution issues. Contact the employee with the complaint resolution details.

1. **Terminations:** Cancel uniform accounts for terminating employees upon receipt of termination notices from Epstar.

9. ADMINISTRATION OF REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS

Employees seeking reimbursement for the purchase or resole/rebuild of uniform boots (per Section 3.2) or for the purchase of authorized business casual items from K&L (per Section 4) must use the following process:

* 1. Limitations on Reimbursements:

a. State of Texas sales tax must be paid to the vendors and are not eligible for reimbursement.

b. Reimbursements may not exceed the employee’s uniform account balance.

c. Reimbursement requests must be submitted to Accounts Payable (A/P) within 90 days of purchase and must be supported with original receipts. If an employee submits a reimbursement voucher after 90 days, the reimbursement will be treated as taxable income and processed through payroll with appropriate taxes withheld.

d. Reimbursements may not be split across two fiscal years’ uniform allowances.

* 1. The employee’s supervisor must verify that the boots meet the agency boot specifications (see Section 3.2) for the employee’s assigned duties. Discussions between employee and supervisor prior to purchase is encouraged and recommended.
  2. After uniform boots or K&L business casual items are purchased and received, the employee completes the [Uniform Allowance Reimbursement Request](http://tfsfinance.tamu.edu/modules/finance/admin/procedures/Uniform%20Allowance%20Reimbursement%20Request.docx) form, attaches the original paid invoices or itemized receipts and submits the reimbursement request package to their supervisor for approval. [**Note:** If a deposit is required at the time the order is placed, the employee must wait until the boots are received and paid in full to request reimbursement.] The approved reimbursement request package is submitted to the bill payer, who will process an L-doc on the uniform program account (account # 212004; object code 5755), create an invoice transmittal, and submit it to A/P.
  3. A/P routes the L-doc package to the Agency Uniform Coordinator for verification and processing. The Agency Uniform Coordinator e-mails an adjustment request to the uniform vendor with the employee’s name and dollar amount. If the employee does not have a sufficient balance to cover the requested adjustment:
  4. The uniform vendor will provide the available balance to the Agency Uniform Coordinator, who will notify the employee and send a revised request to the uniform vendor. The uniform vendor will provide an e-mail confirmation.
  5. The Agency Uniform Coordinator will reject the L-doc to the bill payer, who will make the correction and resubmit the L-doc.
  6. The Agency Uniform Coordinator will attach the e-mail confirmation to the L-doc package, update log of uniform allowance adjustments, sign the reimbursement request form, approve the L-doc, and return the package to A/P.
  7. A/P will perform its normal voucher audit and process payment to the employee.

10. LONE STAR STATE INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM (LSSIMT) UNIFORM

The LSSIMT has a uniform for use in the performance of its assignments. The LSSIMT uniform consists of an LSSIMT shirt and the green uniform cargo pants. Employees who are part of the LSSIMT may wear the LSSIMT uniform shirt while on an LSSIMT assignment or activity. The LSSIMT uniform shirt may also be worn when business casual attire is permitted. Employees may not wear the LSSIMT uniform shirt during normal duty when the standard uniform is required. The procurement and distribution of the LSSIMT shirt is handled by the Field Operations department.

11. LONE STAR STATE HANDCREW

The Lone Star State Handcrew wears the standard uniform. Handcrew members who have been active for a minimum of three years are eligible to receive a Handcrew belt buckle and authorized to wear it with the standard uniform. The procurement and distribution of the Handcrew belt buckle is handled by the Planning and Preparedness department.

CONTACT: [Agency Uniform Coordinator](mailto:mkarns@tfs.tamu.edu), (979) 458-6682