



VIA TRANSIT POLICE DEPARTMENT

Standard Operating Procedures



Section 301 – Uniform, Equipment and Appearance

Office with Primary Responsibility:	COP	Effective Date:	February 23, 2022
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Office(s) with Secondary Responsibilities:		Number of Pages:	5
Forms Referenced in Procedure:	None	Related Procedures:	304 Weapons

.01 INTRODUCTION

- A. This procedure provides officers with the specifications for uniforms and authorized accessories that each officer is required to possess and maintain. Police officers must demonstrate professionalism, disciplined conduct, regimentation and strict adherence to regulations and authorized detail. Therefore, members of the Transit Police Department shall be subject to, and must comply with, the uniform and appearance standards prescribed by the Chief of Transit Police.
- B. This procedure also establishes Departmental regulations for officers regarding the wearing of police uniforms and accessories, the proper clothing for officers in non-uniform assignments and civilian members, and the personal grooming of all officers.
- C. Deviation from any regulation in this procedure is allowed only by written permission of the Chief of Transit Police when necessitated by a specialized or undercover duty assignment.

.02 GENERAL UNIFORM REGULATIONS

- A. Uniforms shall be kept neat, clean, well pressed, and in good repair at all times.
- B. Uniformed members shall wear the duty uniform for their tour of duty. A supervisor may authorize other clothing to be worn as required by the nature of the duty to which a particular member of the Transit Police Department is assigned.
- C. Officers shall carry their badge and police credential card at all times, when armed.
- D. Officers must be armed at all times while on duty unless directed not to carry a weapon by the Chief of Transit Police. When an officer is on duty, the weapon will conform to the standards set forth by Transit Police Department Standard Operating Procedures. Transit Police Officers are not required to be armed off duty. When an officer is armed off duty, he must conform to the weapon standards set forth by Transit Police Department Standard Operating Procedures.
- E. Off-duty Officers out of uniform shall not wear or carry a weapon in such a manner that it will attract attention or be in open view in public. Weapons must be secured in an appropriate holster. This does not apply while working off-duty approved employment in uniform.
- F. Officers shall present themselves in a neat and professional appearance when dressed in uniform or civilian/plain clothes while on duty. Officers shall keep themselves clean and well groomed while on duty. The Chief of Transit Police may approve exceptions to this rule for undercover or special assignments.
- G. No officer, or non-sworn member if applicable, shall wear the uniform, be armed, or carry their badge, or police credential card while under suspension. An officer shall immediately surrender their badges; credentials, firearms, ammunition and other police equipment as warranted to their supervisor or commanding officer upon being notified of their suspension.
- H. All issued equipment and supplies purchased or provided by VIA shall remain the property of VIA and must be surrendered by any member of the Transit Police Department immediately upon notification of discharge or termination from employment to the notifying supervisor or commanding officer.



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- I. Members of the Transit Police Department who have lost, damaged, or destroyed any item issued to them by the Transit Police Department or VIA may be required to make restitution if the loss or damage is the result of a negligent or willful act on their part.
- J. Members of the Transit Police Department shall promptly report the need for repairs of any VIA property issued to, used, or possessed by them to their immediate supervisor who shall make appropriate arrangements for repairs.
- K. The individual officer must provide their own duty weapon(s) at their own expense (firearms). Uniforms and accessories are provided to the individual officer by VIA through the Uniform Allowance Program while other equipment is issued directly to the officer upon the start of their employment. If an officer believes any piece of equipment should be issued or provided by the department, the officer may request the item be provided through a written report to the Chief of Transit Police. The Chief of Transit Police makes the final determination on whether the item is approved for use as well as the potential funding source for the item.

.03 AUTHORIZED UNIFORM SPECIFICATIONS

- A. **Uniform Categories:** Authorized police uniforms are only those issued by the Transit Police Department or authorized by the Chief of Transit Police.
 - 1. Class A: Long sleeve shirt, tie, and hat. Standard for funeral service.
 - 2. Class B- Long or short sleeve shirt with colored patches and metal badge, nameplate, and accessories. Standard for patrol and court. Outer carrier carrier's vests are authorized for regular duty.
 - 3. Class C- Long or short sleeve shirt with subdued patches, embroidered badge and name tag. Authorized for regular patrol. Outer carrier vests are authorized for regular duty. Tactical vests are not authorized while officers attend court.
 - 4. Training- Various colored polo-type shirt with embroidered name and small agency patch. Various colored tactical-style pants.
 - 5. Bicycle- officers will wear a special duty issued uniform, including helmets and accessories. The bike uniform is not authorized for officers attending court.
 - 6. Special Units- Specialized units, such as K-9 and CID, have specific duty uniforms as approved by the Chief of Transit Police
- B. **Caps and Cold Weather Items:** The wearing of the duty uniform cap or hat is optional. Transit Police Officers may be required to wear the duty uniform hat on certain assignments as dictated by the circumstances of the occasion or function. Approved baseball caps with VTPD patch or "Police" are authorized. Personal ski masks, trooper caps (hunting style caps with full-lined flaps), or toboggans are not authorized headgear. Officers may wear a knit cap or neck cover for cold weather as needed. Personal black turtleneck shirts/dickeys may be worn during cold weather underneath the duty uniform shirt.
- C. **Shirts:** The wearing of the issued duty uniform shirt is mandatory for patrol or other assignments requiring police uniform attire. All buttons on the shirt must be buttoned at all times, except collar buttons. Sleeves will not be rolled up or turned under on any uniform shirt. Visible undershirts (crew-neck) may be black or white in color.
- D. **Trousers:** The wearing of the issued duty uniform trousers is mandatory with the duty uniform shirt. Uniform trousers with thigh pockets are authorized.



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E. **Special Duty Uniforms:**

1. Bicycle officers will wear special duty issued uniforms including helmets and accessories.
2. K-9 Officers will wear special duty uniforms as approved and authorized.
3. CID members will wear approved uniform and equipment as authorized.

F. **Shoes:** Uniform footwear types are authorized by the Chief of Transit Police and are available through the VIA uniform allowance system. Shoes must be black, smooth-grained leather, or a similar synthetic material having an acceptable likeness to leather. Loafers, wing-tips, or shoes with ornamental designs, buckles, or straps are not acceptable. Athletic type shoes also known as exercise shoes, walking shoes, running shoes or sport shoes are not authorized.

G. **Boots:** Boots must be black, smooth-grained leather, or similar synthetic material having an acceptable likeness to leather. Approved boot types are available through the VIA uniform allowance system. "Western" style boots, riding boots, or boots with ornamental designs, buckles, or straps are not acceptable.

H. **Socks:** Uniform socks if visible must be black or midnight blue in color.

I. **Jackets:** The wearing of the issued winter uniform jacket is optional for patrol, training or other assignments and may be worn at the discretion of the officer. Uniform jackets may not be worn over civilian attire.

J. **Rain Suits:** The wearing of the issued uniform rain suit or either the rain jacket or pants is optional for patrol or other assignments and may be worn at the discretion of the officer.

K. **Gloves:** Uniform gloves are authorized by the Chief of Transit Police,

L. **Badges:** The wearing of the issued police badge is mandatory with the duty uniform shirt. Embroidered badges are allowed. The wearing of the police hat badge is mandatory with the duty uniform hat if worn. All officers are issued two-tone badges, gold with silver script for supervisors and silver with gold script for patrol officers. Embroidered badges are authorized for the winter jackets, bicycle patrol uniforms, as well as Class B and C uniforms.

M. **Credentials:** VIA Transit Police Department credentials must be carried by the member when on duty and by the off duty sworn member when armed.

N. **Insignia, Rank and Collar Ornaments:**

1. Transit Police Officers who have 5 or more years of service with VIA Transit Police are authorized to wear one white cloth chevron stripe designating Senior Patrol Officer status in recognition of the seniority of the sworn member. Senior Patrol Officers shall not be considered supervisors in any way and the status carries no financial benefit what so ever.
2. Two White colored cloth chevrons denoting Investigator status will be worn on each sleeve of the issued uniform shirts and jackets upon authorization of the Chief of Transit Police.
3. Two Gold colored cloth chevrons denoting Corporal status will be worn on each sleeve of the issued uniform shirts and jackets upon authorization of the Chief of Transit Police
4. Three Gold colored cloth chevrons denoting Sergeant status will be worn on each sleeve of the issued uniform shirts and jackets upon authorization of the Chief of Transit Police.
5. Gold colored lieutenant bars will be worn on the left and right collar side of the issued uniform shirt and jackets upon authorization by the Chief of Transit Police.



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6. Gold colored captain bars will be worn on the left and right collar side of the issued uniform shirt and jackets upon authorization by the Chief of Transit Police.
- O. **Shoulder Patches:** The VIA Transit Police patch will be worn on the left and right shoulder sleeve of the issued uniform shirts and jackets. Special Unit patches may be authorized by the Chief of Transit Police.
- P. **Nameplates:** All officers shall wear a silver metal nameplate and all supervisors shall wear a gold metal nameplate. The nameplate is worn above the right shirt pocket.
- Q. **Duty Belt/Gear:** The wearing of duty belt/ Sam Brown gear is mandatory for patrol or other assignments requiring police uniform attire, unless approved by their supervisor. Belt and gear can be either nylon or leather, however, equipment holders and carriers must be the same material (i.e. nylon magazine and handcuff carriers on nylon belt). Equipment must be kept in good condition.
- R. **Side Arms, Ammunition, and Holsters:** Side arms, ammunition, and holsters must conform to the standards and requirements set forth in Section 304 Weapons.
- S. **Miscellaneous Items:** The following items shall be carried by officers:
 1. Handcuffs
 2. Hand-held radios and carrier
 3. Flashlight
 4. Issued cell phone
 5. Whistle
 6. Issued reflective traffic vest shall be worn when directing traffic, working at the scene of a collision and in low light conditions.
- T. **Service Pins:** The VIA service pin is the only non-Transit Police issued item that may be worn above the nameplate or above the special duty insignia.
- U. **Awards and Special Duty Insignia:** Awards and special unit insignia are authorized by the Chief of Transit Police. These include Bicycle, SWAT, K-9, Peace Officer License level (Advanced, Master, etc.), Instructor, firearms awards. Other insignia may be worn if authorized by the Chief of Transit Police.
- V. **Service Stripes:** Service stripes may be worn on long sleeve uniform shirts or jackets and represent (5) years of service as a commission peace officer. The service stripe will be worn four inches from the end of the left sleeve.
- W. **Appearance:** In accordance with the Code of Conduct, Transit Police supervisors may prohibit any clothing, gear, or equipment that does not conform to a professional appearance and bearing of Transit Police Officers. Beards and goatees are prohibited. Neatly trimmed mustaches are permitted. No portion of a mustache will extend below the corners of the mouth and extreme styles such as "handlebars" are prohibited. For male officers, the length of the hair must not extend below the uniform shirt collar. Female officers must wear their hair tied back style consistent with officer safety. Males are not authorized to wear earrings, females may wear stud or small hoop (2 mm or less) earrings that do not interfere with their safety and limit being torn off.
- X. **Unit Specific Uniform:** Members shall not wear a unit specific uniform for approved off-duty employment.
- Y. **Uniform Return:** An officer leaving the department, shall be required to turn in all uniform equipment bearing any VIA or VIA Transit Police Department logos or emblems. This includes, but is not limited to: badges, Transit Police credentials, VIA ID cards, VIA Transit Police Department patches or emblems, and proximity cards.

.04 TATTOOS / BODY MODIFICATIONS



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Excessive or inappropriate tattoos and/or body modifications must be covered up while on duty. Tattoos on the face, neck, and hands are not authorized and shall be covered. No offensive, sexual, drug-related, racial or other images, symbols, or language tattoos that negatively represents the department are allowed. Supervisors may require officers to cover their tattoos in accordance with this policy. The decision of the Chief of Transit Police is final in determining whether a tattoo is excessive, inappropriate or in a location to be covered.

.05 UNIFORM ITEM APPROVAL AND PURCHASE

- A. All uniform and accessory items must be authorized by the Chief of Transit Police. All uniform and accessory items that are eligible for purchase by the VIA employee uniform system must be listed in the electronic system.
- B. All officers will possess and maintain in good order at least one (1) complete regulation uniform.

.06 MISCELLANEOUS UNIFORM PROVISIONS

- A. Monthly formal inspections and period informal inspections are made by supervisory officers to ensure subordinates are in compliance with this procedure.
- B. Any requested changes or additions to the uniform specifications are routed to the Chief of Transit Police for approval. The decision of the Chief of Transit Police is final.

.07 BALLISTIC VEST - ISSUANCE AND REPLACEMENT

- A. **Ballistic Vest / Body Armor:** All officers, regardless of the type of clothes worn, are encouraged to wear issued body armor. All officers when assigned to a uniformed field assignment **SHALL** wear the issued body armor. Exterior vest carriers designed to look like uniform shirts are authorized. Tactical vest carriers with MOLLE attachments are authorized (as approved by the Chief of Transit Police). Vest carriers shall have the officer's name and badge on them. These may be metal name plates/badges or embroidered name and badge.
- B. All VIA Transit Police Officers are issued a ballistic vest after starting employment.
- C. Officers may request replacement of Department-issued body armor:
 - 1. Their current body armor is damaged or no longer fits correctly; or
 - 2. Their current body armor is five (5) years old or older.
- D. Officers requesting new body armor shall submit a written report documenting the request circumstances to the Chief of the Transit Police for approval.
- E. Officers will return old issued body armor when picking up new ballistic vest.

.08 REIMBURSEMENTS FOR DAMAGED, DESTROYED, OR LOST UNIFORM OR ACCESSORY ITEMS

- A. Officers may be reimbursed for repairs or replacement of clothing damaged in line of duty incidents. Officers will submit their request to the Chief of Transit Police. The decision of the Chief of Transit Police to reimburse the officer.
- B. The request must be made within thirty (30) days from the date of the incident.