



**Commissioned Corps of the US Public Health Service
Scientist Professional Advisory Committee**



Scientist Category Handbook: Uniforms

Last Updated: July 2019

We Wear the PHS Uniform with “Pride and Distinction”



“People wear their uniform every day as visible and reassuring evidence to our fellow citizens that they are on the job keeping us safe. They are the officers and enlisted people of proud and honorable services. Our country and the world need to know that.”

- Gerald Farrell, CAPT USN (ret)

Uniform wear is considered essential. As of July 1, 2008, daily uniform wear is required by all US-based PHS officers. Uniform wear is important to officership, to visibility of the Service, and for your career. Correct uniform wear shows respect for your country, your Service, for all who have served in uniform, and for yourself. This section of the Scientist Handbook is intended to inform and provide helpful information to officers on uniform wear and personal appearance.

Who are Uniform Authorities?

The National Uniform Authority (NUA) is the Surgeon General. The NUA may designate a Local Uniform Authority (LUA) as appropriate.

Where is the official PHS page on uniforms?

<http://www.usphs.gov/AboutUs/uniforms.aspx>

What are the PHS uniform regulations?

- Book 4 of the Commissioned Corps Issuance System:
<https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/ccis/CCISToc.aspx?ShowTOC=Y>
- Instructions for uniforms for female officers (June 28, 2016):
https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/ccis/documents/CC421_02.pdf
- Instructions for uniforms for male officers (December 15, 2015):
https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/ccis/documents/CC421_01.pdf

Where can I buy uniforms and components?¹

New Uniforms:

- Navy Exchange Uniforms Store (for all uniforms and components, except ODU shirts & trousers):
<https://www.mynavyexchange.com/nex/uniforms>
- Marlow White:
<http://www.marlowwhite.com/public-health-service-uniforms.html>
- Vanguard (for Devices, Insignia, and Ribbons)
<https://www.vanguardmil.com/collections/public-health-service>
- US Coast Guard Uniform Distribution Center (for ODU shirts & trousers only):
<https://shopcgx.com/>
- The Uniform Shop at the Walter Reed National Medical Center located at Main St, Bldg. 1 Room 1603, Bethesda, MD 20889 (M-Sat 0800-1800). Phone: 301-295-1489 Fax: 301-295-1268

The Division of Commissioned Corps Personnel and Readiness has created an ODU Ordering Cheat Sheet:

[https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/PDF_docs/Directions%20%20Guidance%20for%20Ordering%20DU%20online_31Aug12%20\(3\).pdf](https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/PDF_docs/Directions%20%20Guidance%20for%20Ordering%20DU%20online_31Aug12%20(3).pdf)

Reconditioned Uniforms:

Lighthouse Uniform Company:

<http://catalog.lighthouseuniform.com/phs/>

Used Uniforms:

Some Commissioned Officers Association (COA) branches may have used uniform and insignia “shops.” One example is the Atlanta COA Uniform Store (<http://www.atlantacoa.com/uniform-store>).

There is also a Facebook page called USPHS Officer Swap and Shop <https://www.facebook.com/groups/938156386275995/>. Officers can trade uniform components directly with one another.

How do I pay for alterations?

¹ Note, the websites are provided for informational purposes only, and do not imply endorsement by the USPHS or the Scientist Category.

Some alterations, such as hemming, are included in the price of pants and skirts (and some other uniform components) ordered through the online Navy Exchange uniform store. If you order them online, and get the alterations done at a Navy uniform store, they will complete the alterations free of charge (but you must show them your receipt). Please make sure to check with your nearest Navy Exchange uniform store to confirm what alterations are covered with your online purchase. Officers purchasing items through other avenues are responsible for all alteration costs.

Where can I get PHS nametags, pre-made ribbon bars etc.?

- Ultrathin Company (ribbons assembled on ribbon bars, name tags, and medals):
<http://www.ultrathin.com/>
- Navy Exchange Uniforms Store (for all Nametags):
<https://www.mynavyexchange.com/nex/uniforms>
- Nametags can also be ordered from the uniform shop at the Walter Reed National Medical Center in Bethesda, MD [phone: 301-295-1489, fax: 301-295-1268].

Challenges with uniform wear:

- *Shoulder boards:* Avoid “dragging anchor.” Here is the correct orientation for left shoulder boards. If you wear them so the anchor is pointing towards your back, you are “dragging anchor.”



- *Looking sharp:* Many officers have sedentary but stressful assignments, and the many responsibilities of being an officer can be difficult to balance. As we age, maintaining a “trim” appearance becomes more of a challenge. As announced on July 10, 2017, on

October 1, 2018, approved weight standards for all PHS officers will go into effect (https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/bulletin/bmi_standards_m.aspx).

Care and Cleaning of the Uniform

Q. How do you spit polish leather shoes?

A. *Try the technique described on this website:*

<http://usmilitary.about.com/cs/generalinfo/ht/spitshine.htm>

Q. Is there another way to clean my khaki uniform besides dry cleaning? That's expensive and doesn't seem to work.

A. *Some officers have had success with hand washing their uniforms with Woolite and/or stain removers. Other officers have simply put their uniforms in the washing machine and then air dry them.*

Q. Is there a way to remove "pilling" or rough uniform appearance?

A. *A shaving razor or fabric shaver can be used to freshen up your uniforms' appearance.*