

Memorandum



Date: July 17, 2014

To: Honorable Chairwoman Rebeca Sosa
And Members, Board of County Commissioners

From: Carlos A. Gimenez
Mayor 

Subject: Miami-Dade Police Department Uniform Standards (Directive No. 140455)

In response to Commissioner Dennis C. Moss' inquiry about the Miami-Dade Police Department's (MDPD) uniform standards, the department's Fiscal Administration Bureau researched the MDPD's current uniform specifications, as well as those utilized by various law enforcement agencies throughout the State of Florida. Several different factors were reviewed, including uniform manufacturer, fabric color, fabric content, and departmental uniform standards.

Uniform Manufacturer

MDPD currently purchases its uniforms through Elbeco Apparel Inc., one of the largest manufacturers of uniforms in the United States. Elbeco has been in the manufacturing business for approximately 100 years, and is an industry leader. Currently, 30 other sheriff's departments in Florida purchase their uniforms from Elbeco, including Broward, Palm Beach, and Volusia counties.

Elbeco's primary competitor is VF Imagewear, Inc., a 40-year-old multinational company which produces uniforms for many federal, state, and local agencies. Agencies currently utilizing VF Imagewear uniforms include Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office, Cape Coral Police Department, Fort Myers Police Department, and Florida Highway Patrol (FHP).

City of Miami Police Department's uniforms are manufactured by Fechheimer Brothers Company under a City contract.

It should be noted that numerous agencies have changed uniform vendors throughout the years as a result of variations in fabric content, weight, and treatment, as well as price factors.

Uniform Color

MDPD requires a special dye lot (color blend) for its uniforms. This blend is specific to MDPD which requires the contracted company to store large bolts of fabric for the manufacturing of MDPD uniforms to ensure color consistency. At this time, this color is specific to MDPD and is not used by any other agency.

In contrast, the colors utilized by FHP are not agency specific, and are sold to other public safety agencies across the country. Currently, MDPD's contracted price is lower than the state price for uniforms. If MDPD were to change uniform colors, or specifications, the transition would cost Miami-Dade County approximately \$2 million.

Fabric Content

Our research revealed that most uniforms supplied to law enforcement agencies are either 100% polyester, a poly-wool blend, poly-cotton blend, or poly-rayon blend. In years past, MDPD, Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office and Collier County Sheriff's Office all utilized the polyester-wool blend for its uniforms, but moved away from it in favor of the lighter and cooler polyester and polyester-rayon options. Florida Highway Patrol utilizes a polyester-wool blend for both its shirts and slacks, as does Jacksonville Police Department, although they differ slightly in weave and fabric weight. City of Miami uses 100% polyester for both, as do most other agencies (see attached). Data provided by Elbeco indicates that a large majority of Florida law enforcement agencies have elected to wear 100% polyester shirts and slacks due mostly to its performance in hot weather, as well as its comparatively lower cost. A polyester-wool blend can cost 18-25% more than the polyester or polyester-rayon blends.

However, it is important to remember that the textile industry is constantly changing, with new technologies, treatments, and fiber weaves creating lower-care, higher durability, and more comfortable fabric choices. These innovations will provide viable options for improved uniform wear for our department in future years.

MDPD Uniform Standards

The MDPD has policy in place in the Departmental Manual, Personal Appearance, which specifies appropriate uniform pieces and related accessories for a variety of different functions or occasions. Sworn personnel are required to comply with the Department's policy, including proper size and fit, a neat and pressed appearance, and clean shoes and accessories. In addition, the policy also prohibits the alteration of the uniform in any way, except as required for initial fitting and weight fluctuation.

It has come to our attention that some employees may not be strictly adhering to the established policy. Strict adherence to the policy, in its entirety, will be strongly enforced moving forward to ensure the Department presents a polished and professional image to the public.

In conclusion, there is a wide variety of uniform fabric contents currently utilized by law enforcement agencies throughout the State of Florida. While most other agencies utilize standard, off-the-shelf color coordinates, MDPD has a singular and unique color palette. These factors, in and of themselves, do not necessarily determine proper fit or guarantee a professional appearance. An understated, but critical component is the agency's strict enforcement of its uniform standards. MDPD's policy requires that employees be inspected each time they report for duty.

Should you require additional information, please contact J.D. Patterson, Director, Miami-Dade Police Department, at (305) 471-3272.

Attachment

C: Genaro "Chip" Iglesias, Deputy Mayor
J.D. Patterson, Director, Miami-Dade Police Department
Christopher Agrippa, Clerk of the Courts

Florida Law Enforcement Agencies
By Uniform Content

Agency	100% Polyester Slacks and Shirt	100% Polyester Slacks and Polyester-Rayon Shirt	Polyester-Wool Blend Slacks and Shirt
Alachua County Sheriff's Office	X		
Baker County Sheriff's Office	X		
Bay County Sheriff's Office	X		
Broward County Sheriff's Office	X		
Charlotte County Sheriff's Office	X		
City of Miami Police Department	X		
Clay County Sheriff's Office	X		
Collier County Sheriff's Office	X		
Columbia County Sheriff's Office	X		
Escambia County Sheriff's Office	X		
Florida Highway Patrol			X
Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office		X	
Indian River County Sheriff's Office	X		
Jacksonville Police Department			X
Lake County Sheriff's Office	X		
Lee County Sheriff's Office	X		
Madison County Sheriff's Office	X		
Manatee County Sheriff's Office	X		
Marion County Sheriff's Office	X		
Miami-Dade Police Department		X	
Monroe County Sheriff's Office	X		
Nassau County Sheriff's Office	X		
Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office	X		
Orange County Sheriff's Office	X		
Osceola County Sheriff's Office	X		
Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office	X		
Pinellas County Sheriff's Office	X		
Putnam County Sheriff's Office	X		
Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office	X		
Seminole County Sheriff's Office	X		
St Johns County Sheriff's Office	X		
St Lucie County Sheriff's Office	X		
Suwannee County Sheriff's Office	X		
Volusia County Sheriff's Office	X		
Walton County Sheriff's Office	X		