

**From:** Deputy Director Operations, NPS [NPS\\_Deputy\\_Director\\_Operations@nps.gov](mailto:NPS_Deputy_Director_Operations@nps.gov)  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 9, 2024 4:32 PM  
**To:** NPS All Employees [NPS\\_All\\_Employees@nps.gov](mailto:NPS_All_Employees@nps.gov)  
**Subject:** Clarifying the NPS Uniform Policy

Colleagues,

Recently, we've received an increasing amount of requests from employees asking to participate in uniform in a variety of events and activities, including events not organized by the NPS, which potentially conflict with our uniform policy, Director's Order and [Reference Manual 43](#) (DO/RM 43). Similarly, we've seen numerous instances where employees wish to add adornments or ornaments like pins, ribbons, and buttons to the uniform.

These requests have prompted us to review our current policy and address information that conflicts with the official uniform policy. Efforts are already underway to update our entire uniform policy, which will be available later this year, subject to our labor-management obligations. As part of that update, I've asked our legal, ethics, and human resources teams to provide clearer language about what employees can and cannot do in their official capacity, on duty and in uniform. **In the meantime, all employees should refer only to DO/RM 43 for guidance on participation in uniform in events and activities outside of those organized by the NPS.**

DO/RM 43 states that while in uniform, NPS employees are prohibited from, "participating in or attending any demonstration or public event wherein the wearing of the uniform could be construed as agency support for a particular issue, position, or political party." Also, unless approved by the ADVRP, the only bureau-wide ornaments approved for regular wear include the NPS-issued badge, NPS-provided name bar, American flag pin (optional), and USNPS collar insignia (with dress uniform).

This guidance extends to anyone participating in activities through Employee Organizations (EOs) like Employee Resource Groups, professional associations, civic groups and networking clubs. The Department [recently sent an all-employee email](#), reminding all of us that EOs are not federal entities, and employees are not performing official duties while engaged in strictly EO activities.

Like many of you, I have spent a number of years wearing a uniform, first with the U.S. Army and now, proudly, with the NPS. Putting on my uniform is a constant reminder that I'm part of a diverse team supporting the NPS mission, and of the high standards of conduct we all ascribe to when in uniform. While in uniform we represent the NPS and have a responsibility to balance our personal and professional lives.

You are a valued member of this organization and contribute to our workforce's diversity of identities, cultures, and experiences. It's essential we apply our policies equitably, legally, and consistently. We will work with regional directors and superintendents to address questions on our uniform policy.

Thank you,

Frank Lands

Deputy Director, Operations

National Park Service