



The CAP Uniform

GOALS FOR THIS MODULE

1. Explain why proper grooming and uniform wear is important in Civil Air Patrol.
2. Identify the various approved uniform combinations.
3. Give examples of when and when not to wear various Civil Air Patrol uniforms.
4. Demonstrate proper uniform wear for the local unit and/or wing.

Senior members are role models for cadets, and as CAP members, they are ambassadors of the Air Force in their communities. The way CAP members present themselves exemplifies the high standards CAP has set for accomplishing its missions. When wearing the Air Force style uniform, the image presented reflects upon the Air Force.

Each new member should know the proper wear of the CAP Air Force style uniform and the CAP distinctive uniform, the grooming and weight standards for CAP members wearing the Air Force style uniform combinations, and the proper wear of Civil Air Patrol insignia.

The image a CAP member presents to the public leaves a lasting impression of Civil Air Patrol and all it stands for.

The Air Force and CAP dress and grooming standards are a blend of tradition and practicality. The uniform draws attention to the individual, and what is worn on the uniform represents the resumé of the member's service to the organization.

Personal Grooming When Wearing the Air Force Style Uniforms

Members of CAP should be well groomed and should ensure that their personal appearance at all times reflects credit upon themselves and CAP. CAP Manual 39-1, *CAP Uniform Manual*, discusses weight standards (Attachment 1), grooming standards (Attachment 2), and all CAP uniform combinations available for wear.

Senior members who do not meet the standards for wearing the Air Force style uniform are not barred from membership and participation but are not permitted to wear that uniform. CAP has a variety of other uniform combinations senior members not meeting the fitness or grooming standards may wear.

Weight Standards: Weight standards for wear of CAP uniforms are in Attachment 1 of CAP Manual 39-1. They are calculated at the Air Force's maximum allowable weight for gender and height plus 10%.

Hair Styles: Hair should be clean, well groomed, neat, and without an excessive amount of grooming aids. Dyed hair should look natural. Hair must not touch the eyebrows when groomed or protrude below the front band of properly worn men's head gear. Hair may be visible in front of the women's flight cap.

Men's hairstyles must have a tapered appearance on both sides and back, both with and without head gear. A tapered appearance dictates that the individual's hair will conform

to the shape of the head, curving inward to the termination point. The bulk, or thickness, of hair must not exceed 1¼ inches, regardless of length. The hair must not touch the ears and only the closely cut or shaved hair on the back of the neck may touch the collar.

Women's hairstyles must present a professional appearance. The hair must not extend in length (on all sides) below an invisible line drawn parallel to the ground at the bottom edge of the shirt collar at the back of the neck. Hair must not exceed three inches in bulk or be styled in a way that prevents proper wear of head gear.

Wigs and Hairpieces: Wigs and hair pieces must meet the same standards of appearance as natural hair and have good quality and fit.

Mustaches: Mustaches must not extend downward beyond the lip line of the upper lip or extend sideways beyond a vertical line drawn upward from the corner of the mouth.

Sideburns: Sideburns must be neatly trimmed and tapered in the same manner as the haircut. They must be straight and of even width (i.e., not flared). They must end in a clean-shaven horizontal line. Sideburns must not extend beyond the lowest part of the exterior ear opening.

Beards: Beards are not worn with Air Force style uniform combinations.

Cosmetics/Nail Polish: Cosmetics and nail polish should be conservative and in good taste.

Jewelry: A watch should be conservative. A maximum of three rings is allowed. One bracelet may be worn if it is conservative, presents a proper military image, is no wider than one inch, and doesn't subject the wearer to potential injury. ID bracelets and medical alert bracelets are examples of acceptable pieces.

Earrings: Women may wear small conservative diamond, gold, white pearl, or silver spherical pierced or clip earrings with all uniforms unless wear of the earrings would be unsafe. Only one earring per ear may be worn, and the earrings must be attached to the ear lobe.

Eyeglasses and Other Ornaments: Conservative eyeglass frames may be worn as needed and when not prohibited by safety regulations. Ornaments on the head, visible ornaments around the neck, and ornamentation on eyeglass lenses or frames are not acceptable while in uniform.

Religious Apparel: While in uniform, members may wear certain visible items of religious apparel. CAPM 39-1 defines religious apparel as "articles of clothing or dress which are part of the doctrine of traditional observance of the religious faith practiced by the member." Hair and grooming practices are not included in the meaning of religious apparel.

Jewelry of a religious nature must conform to standards set forth in this regulation for wear of nonreligious jewelry.

Religious head coverings are authorized only when military head gear is not authorized. Head coverings must be plain dark blue or black without adornment. Also, they may be worn underneath military headgear if they do not interfere with the proper fit or appearance of the headgear. For example, Jewish yarmulkes meet this requirement when they do not exceed six inches in diameter.

Uniforms

Below are basic wear guidelines for the most popular CAP uniforms. Detailed photos of these combinations are in the *Next Step* binder.

Neither this module nor the photos in the new member binder substitute for knowing the requirements for uniform wear found in CAP Manual 39-1.

Battle Dress Uniform

The Battle Dress Uniform (BDU) is acceptable for missions, unit meetings, and unit activities. It is not appropriate when conducting office visits or appointments (with local officials, for example). Men and women wear the same type BDU.

Headgear: All personnel must wear the camouflage pattern BDU or unit authorized cap.

Shirt: The shirt is worn outside the trousers at all times. Sleeves may be rolled up but may not be shortened by cutting them. If rolled up, sleeves will touch or come within one inch of the forearm when the arm is bent at a 90-degree angle. A brown or black t-shirt must be worn.

Trousers: Trousers must be bloused over the combat boots.

Combat Boots: Combat boots are the only footwear authorized for wear with the BDU.

Belt and Buckle: The belt is dark blue, cotton or elastic, with black metal subdued buckle and tip.

Tapes: The “Civil Air Patrol” tape is centered immediately above the left breast pocket and the “name” tape immediately above the right breast pocket.

Grade Insignia: Embroidered grade insignia on ultramarine blue background are centered on both collars. Senior member NCOs and senior members without grade wear CAP cutouts on both sides of the collar.

U.S. Flag: The reversed flag with blue field facing forward is worn on the right shoulder, 1/2 inch below the shoulder seam and centered on collar.

Members who do not meet weight and grooming standards or who do not choose to wear the BDU may opt to wear the blue utility uniform. This uniform combination can be found in CAP Manual 39-1.

Air Force Style Uniform

Flight Cap: This hat is worn slightly to the wearer's right with the vertical crease of the cap in line with the center of the forehead in a straight line with the nose. The bottom of the cap is approximately one inch from the eyebrows in the front. Women may have hair showing in front of the flight cap.

When not worn, the flight cap should be tucked under the belt on either side, between the first and second belt loops, provided it does not extend over the top of the belt.

Men's Long- and Short-Sleeved Blue Shirt: Wear these shirts tucked into the service pants. Sleeves may not be rolled up. A white t-shirt must be worn (V-neck, U-neck or athletic style).

Rank Insignia (mandatory): Officers will wear gray embroidered epaulets with rank insignia.

Gray Nametag (mandatory): Rests on but not over the top edge of the right pocket, centered between the edges of the pocket.

Badges and Ribbons: Aviation badges are worn 1/2 inch above pocket or ribbons if worn; bottom row of ribbons must rest on, but not over, top of pocket.

Tie (mandatory w/long sleeve): Tip of the tie will be no more than 1½ inches above or 1½ inches below the top of the belt buckle.

Tie Tac/Bar: It may be of the CAP crest, AF coat of arms, or the individual's grade insignia type. The tie tac/bar must be highly polished. Center the tie tac/bar between the bottom edge of the knot and the bottom tip of the tie.

Women's Long- and Short-Sleeved Blue Shirt: These shirts come in two versions, the tuck-in style and the semi-form fitting style. The tie tab is mandatory with the long-sleeved shirt and optional with a short-sleeved shirt.

Semi-Form Fitting Shirt: This shirt can be worn tucked in or left out of either the service slacks or skirt. Place accouterments as indicated below.

Tuck-In Shirt: This shirt must be tucked into the service slacks and skirts.

Rank insignia (mandatory): Officers will wear gray embroidered epaulets with rank insignia.

Gray Nametag (mandatory): Center on the right side between the buttons and the arm seam. Worn even with to 1½ inches higher or lower than the first exposed button and horizontal to the ground.

Badges and Ribbons: Aviation badges, specialty insignia and specialty badges are worn ½ inch above the ribbons (only two badges may be worn in this position). Ribbons are worn centered on the left side, parallel to the ground. Align bottom row of ribbons with the name tag.

Tie Tab (mandatory w/long sleeved shirt): Blue inverted V-shape tie.

Service Trousers/Slacks: Wear these dark blue pants with the bottom front resting on the front of the shoe/boot with a slight break in the crease. The back of the trousers' legs will be approximately ⅞ inch longer than the front. These may be worn with any of the service uniform combinations.

Service Skirt: Dark blue skirt with or without belt loops. If the item has belt loops, the belt must be worn. The hem of the skirt may be no shorter than the top of the kneecap and no longer than the bottom of the kneecap.

Male Belt: Blue woven 1¼ inch cotton web or 1¼ inch elastic, solid or woven belt with matching silver-color metal tip and buckle of chrome-like finish. Silver tip end of the belt extends beyond the buckle, facing the wearer's left (no blue fabric shows). *Female Belt*: Blue woven one inch cotton web or one inch elastic, solid or woven belt with matching silver-color metal tip and buckle of chrome-like finish. Silver tip end of the belt extends beyond the buckle facing the wearer's right.

Footwear: Footwear should always be shined and in good repair.

With the service trousers/slacks, wear the low quarters (also known as oxfords), oxfords with low wedge heel, combat boots, or black dress boots. When the low quarters are worn, men must wear plain black socks. Women may wear plain black socks or hose. (See below for description of hose allowed). With the boots, either plain black or white socks may be worn.

Women may also choose to wear plain black pumps (high-heeled shoes) with the service slacks. The pumps must have no design. The heel must be of a height suitable to the individual, but no higher than 2 ½ inches. Platform shoes or extra thick soles aren't allowed. When the pumps are worn, women

must wear hose. Hose will be neutral, dark brown, black, off black, or dark blue in a shade that complements the uniform and the individual's skin tone. No patterned hose will be worn.

With the service skirt, women may wear the low quarters, dress boots, or pumps. Regardless of the shoe chosen, women must wear hose with the skirt. (See previous paragraph for restrictions on the pumps and hose.) It's more professional looking to wear the pumps rather than the low quarter shoes with the skirt.

Women may also opt to wear dress boots with the skirt, but these must be removed and oxfords or pumps worn in the member's work place. Boots may not have extra thick or platform soles. Heel height of the boot may not exceed 2½ inches.

CAP Uniform Choices Other Than Air Force Style Uniform

There are two primary choices of CAP uniform for those who do not meet the weight standards (but do meet the grooming standards), or for those who choose not to wear the Air Force style uniform. Simply stated, the CAP distinctive uniform has gray slacks/trousers or skirt, gray nametag, and gray epaulets. The new CAP corporate uniform has blue Air Force slacks/trousers or skirt, blue nametag, and blue epaulets. Both are worn with white aviator shirts. The following are the detailed descriptions of each uniform.

CAP Distinctive Basic Uniform - White aviator shirt and gray slacks or skirt

Men's Long- and Short-Sleeved White Shirt With Epaulets: Wear these shirts tucked into the gray pants. Sleeves may not be rolled up.

Rank Insignia (mandatory): Officers will wear gray embroidered epaulets with rank insignia.

Gray Nametag (mandatory): Rests on but not over the top edge of the right pocket, centered between the edges of the pocket.

Badges and Ribbons: Aviation badges are worn ½ inch above pocket or ribbons if worn; bottom row of ribbons must rest on, but not over top of pocket. Only CAP ribbons may be worn.

Tie (mandatory w/long sleeve): Blue Air Force or CAP tie. Tip of the tie will be no more than 1½ inches above or 1½ inches below the top of the belt buckle.

Tie tac/bar: It may be of the CAP crest or the individual's grade insignia type. The tie tac/bar must be highly polished. Center the tie tac/bar between the bottom edge of the knot and the bottom tip of the tie.

Shoes: Any type of plain, black dress shoe is acceptable.

Women's Long- and Short-Sleeved White Shirt With Epaulets: Wear shirts tucked into slacks or skirt.

Rank Insignia (mandatory): Officers will wear gray embroidered epaulets with rank insignia.

Gray Nametag (mandatory): Rests on but not over the top edge of the right pocket, centered between the edges of the pocket.

Badges and Ribbons: Aviation badges are worn ½ inch above pocket or ribbons if worn; bottom row of ribbons must rest on, but not over top of pocket. Only CAP ribbons may be worn.

Female Floppy Bow Tie: Required with long-sleeved aviator shirt.

Slacks/Skirt: Any type medium gray dress slacks/skirt may be worn. No jeans or cotton twill casual slacks/skirts are allowed. Skirt length will be no longer than bottom of knee cap or shorter than top of knee cap. If a belt is worn, any type of black belt with conservative buckle is acceptable.

Shoes: Any type of plain, black dress shoe or pump is acceptable.

Members who do not meet weight standards (but do meet grooming standards) and do not choose to wear the CAP distinctive uniform of gray slacks/skirt may opt to wear the new CAP corporate uniform of blue slacks/skirt. This uniform combination can be found in CAP Manual 39-1 or corresponding policy letters.

CAP Corporate Uniform - White aviator shirt and blue Air Force slacks or skirt

Men's Long- and Short-Sleeved White Shirt With Epaulets: Wear these shirts tucked into the gray pants. Sleeves may not be rolled up.

Rank Insignia (mandatory): Officers will wear blue embroidered epaulets with rank insignia.

Blue Two-Line Nametag (mandatory): Rests on but not over the top edge of the right pocket, centered between the edges of the pocket.

Badges and ribbons: Aviation badges are worn 1/2 inch above pocket or ribbons; bottom row of ribbons must rest on but not over top of pocket.

Tie (mandatory with long sleeve): Blue Air Force tie. Tip of the tie will be no more than 1 1/2 inches above or 1 1/2 inches below the top of the belt buckle.

Tie Tac/Bar: It may be of the CAP crest or the individual's grade insignia type. The tie tac/bar must be highly polished. Center the tie tac/bar between the bottom edge of the knot and the bottom tip of the tie.

Women's Long- and Short-Sleeved White Shirt with epaulets: Wear shirts tucked into slacks or skirt.

Rank Insignia (mandatory): Officers will wear blue embroidered epaulets with rank insignia.

Blue Two-Line Nametag (mandatory): Rests on but not over the top edge of the right pocket, centered between the edges of the pocket

Badges and Ribbons: Aviation badges are worn 1/2 inch above pocket or ribbons if worn; bottom row of ribbons must rest on but not over top of pocket.

Female tie: Required with long-sleeved aviator shirt.

Service Trousers/Slacks: Wear Air Force dark blue pants with the bottom front resting on the front of the shoe/boot with a slight break in the crease. The back of the trouser leg will be approximately 7/8 of an inch longer than the front. The trousers may be worn with any of the service uniform combinations.

Service Skirt: The Air Force dark blue skirt with or without belt loops is worn. If the skirt has belt loops, the belt must be worn. The hem of the skirt may be no shorter than the top of the knee cap and no longer than the bottom of the knee cap.

Belt, Male: Blue woven 1¼ inch cotton web or 1¼ inch elastic, solid or woven belt with matching silver metal tip and buckle of chrome-like finish. Silver tip end of the belt extends beyond the buckle, facing the wearer's left (no blue fabric shows). **Female:** Blue woven 1 inch cotton web or 1 inch elastic, solid, or woven belt with matching silver-color metal tip and buckle of chrome-like finish. Silver tip end of the belt extends beyond the buckle facing the wearer's right.

Footwear: Footwear should always be shined and in good repair. With the service trousers/slacks, the low quarters (also known as oxfords), oxfords with low wedge heel, combat boots, or black dress boots may be worn.

When the low quarters are worn, men must wear plain black socks. Women may wear plain black socks or hose. Hose will be neutral, dark brown, black, off black, or dark blue in a shade that complements the uniform and the individual's skin tone. No patterned hose will be worn.

Women may also choose to wear plain black pumps (high-heeled shoes) with the service slacks. The pumps must have no design. The heel must be of a height suitable to the individual but no higher than 2½ inches. Platform shoes or extra thick soles aren't allowed. When the pumps are worn, women must wear hose.

With the service skirt, women may wear the low quarters, dress boots, or pumps. Regardless of the shoe chosen, women must wear hose with the skirt. It is more professional looking to wear the pumps rather than the low quarters with the skirt. Women may also opt to wear dress boots with the skirt, but these must be removed and oxfords or pumps worn in the member's CAP work place. Boots may not have extra thick or

platform soles. Heel height of the boot may not exceed 2½ inches.

Wear of CAP Uniforms

The CAP uniform may be worn when engaged in normal duties as a CAP member. With certain restrictions, uniforms may be worn on commercial or military flights or when visiting military installations. The service or dress uniform is appropriate for social activities on military installations or when attending functions of a military nature when representing CAP.

The CAP uniform should **not** be worn

- more than one hour after the close of activities,
- when engaged in private employment,
- when sponsoring or advertising a commercial interest,
- when participating in a public demonstration not approved by the Air Force,
- at any meeting or demonstration of a group which advocates illegal acts or violence against the government or other groups, and
- in foreign countries except when participating in official exchange programs or other international events.

Conclusion

The image CAP members present to the public will leave a lasting impression about them and the Civil Air Patrol. New members should take the time to know and wear their choice of uniform properly and proudly.

Reference:
CAPM 39-1 – *CAP Uniform Manual*