

**A UNIFORM APPROACH TO  
PRESENTING THE PROPER IMAGE**

Executive Leadership

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An applied research project submitted to the National Fire Academy  
as part of the Executive Fire Officer Program

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## ABSTRACT

Some members of the Madison Heights Fire Department had expressed a desire for a change in the style of uniform they wear. The problem faced by the department was how to balance the desire of these employees against an acceptable public image for the department.

The purpose of this applied research project was to assess those factors that might be considered in implementing a change in uniform styles and to make recommendations on whether or not a uniform change should be made and if so, how it could best be accomplished.

A descriptive research methodology based on surveys of Madison Heights fire fighters and residents was utilized. Answers were sought to the following research questions:

1. What factors should be considered in the selection of fire department uniforms, specifically as they relate to appearance and public image?
2. If a change in uniform styles was recommended, what style should be adopted?
3. If a change in uniform styles was recommended, how should such a change be implemented?

For data collection purposes, a single-question survey was distributed to the 38 members of the Madison Heights Fire Department as well as 200 residents of the city. The goal of the survey was to elicit information on what style of uniform was preferred by each group.

The response rate for fire fighter surveys was 63.15% while residents responded at a rate of 32.81%. A plurality of fire fighters (47.82%) and a majority of residents (56.45%) favored the traditional, paramilitary style uniform currently worn by department members.

Recommendations made included no change in uniform styles at this time as well as the formation of a joint labor/management uniform committee to study the issue of department

uniform policy and to bring forward a recommended policy to the chief of the department.

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## INTRODUCTION

Webster's II New Riverside University Dictionary (Soukhanov, 1984) defines "uniform" thusly; uniform, adj., 1. Always the same: UNVARYING. 2. Being the same as another or others: IDENTICAL. 3. Consistent in appearance. Uniform, n., 1. A distinctive outfit intended to identify those who wear it as members of a specific group. 2. Any characteristic style of dress.

Throughout history, uniforms have been utilized to identify those who wore them. In the Revolutionary War, the army of the British became known as the Red Coats for their distinctive uniform style. The Civil War has long been described as the Battle of Blue vs. Gray based upon the colors of uniforms worn by the Union and Confederate armies respectively.

Uniforms now affect our daily lives and we come into contact with them in all walks of life. Corporations spend millions of dollars a year developing corporate images, logos and distinctive uniforms. Most Americans instantly recognize the brown uniform of their United Parcel Service deliveryman, the uniform worn by their United States Postal Service mail carrier and the uniform worn by the employees of the local McDonald's restaurant. Professional sports franchises can make millions of dollars each year merchandising the uniforms of their teams. In fact, sports uniform styles were relatively static for years. Now, many teams change styles with some regularity, each time spurring a new round of supporter investment in replica uniforms and other team memorabilia.

As fire service and police organizations developed, they took many of their cues from military organizations. They adopted a military-style chain of command and rank structure, adopting the corresponding insignias as well. Most fire and police service uniforms also had a military look about them and helped to shape an image of respect, authority and confidence in those

institutions.

Now, with the advent and wide distribution of reality-based television shows such as *Cops* and *Real Stories of the Highway Patrol*, the work of fire fighters and police officers has been brought into the living rooms of homes throughout the nation. It is in some measure that this phenomenon is responsible for the interest of some members of the Madison Heights Fire Department in seeking a change in the style of uniform they wear. This television-based exposure to their counterparts around the country has offered the Madison Heights fire fighters a glimpse of other fire fighters in various new, non-traditional uniforms. Therefore, the problem faced by the Madison Heights Fire Department is how to balance the desire of some employees for a change in uniform styles while still maintaining an acceptable public image for the department.

The purpose of this applied research is to assess those factors that might be considered in implementing a change in uniform styles and to make recommendations on whether or not a uniform change should be made and if so, how can it best be accomplished. Using a descriptive research methodology based upon surveys of both the Madison Heights Fire Department employees as well as 200 members of the public they serve, the research questions to be answered are:

1. What factors should be considered in the selection of fire department uniforms, specifically as they relate to appearance and public image?
2. If a change in uniform styles is recommended, what style should be adopted?
3. If a change in uniform styles is recommended, how should such a change be implemented?

## **BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE**

The city of Madison Heights, Michigan is a suburban community of approximately 31,000 residents located two miles directly north of the city of Detroit. Madison Heights maintains a full-time, paid fire department of 39 sworn members operating out of two fire stations. The fire department protects an area of approximately 7.5 square miles, providing fire suppression and hazardous materials response capabilities as well as advanced life support service with transport to six area hospitals. The department is also in the process of implementing an aggressive program in technical rescue operations as well as improving its response capabilities to terrorist acts including weapons of mass destruction.

In addition to the emergency services listed above, residents of the city also enjoy many non-emergency services. The department provides a public fire education program, reaching out to school age children, senior residents and the business community. Many of the department's fire fighters are actively engaged in providing residents with instruction in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and first aid training. Low-income and senior residents are eligible to receive smoke alarms as well as the installation of these devices from the department at no charge. Free blood pressure screenings are offered daily at both fire stations and the Madison Heights Fire Fighters Association provides residents with a no cost "File of Life" program to ensure that important medical information is available in the event of an emergency.

The city of Madison Heights, Michigan was incorporated in 1955. Prior to that time, the area was known as Royal Oak Township. In the township days, a volunteer fire fighting force protected the area. Following incorporation as a city, a full-time paid fire department was created

and on November 24, 1959, the Madison Heights Fire Fighters Association received a certificate of affiliation as Local #1357 of the International Association of Fire Fighters.

Retired Madison Heights Fire Department Chief William A. Donahue (personal communication, September 27, 2001) provided the following background on uniforms worn by the department. The original uniform worn by the fire fighters of the Madison Heights Fire Department was of a navy blue herringbone pattern, both shirt and pants. Officers of the department, sergeants and lieutenants, wore a gray shirt with epaulets and navy blue gabardine slacks. Rank was distinguished by the lieutenants wearing a single silver bar on both collar points while sergeants wore three stripes on their shirt sleeves, both traditional military insignias. All members of the department were issued a Madison Heights Fire Department badge to be worn on the left chest of the uniform shirt.

In 1961, the color of the fire fighters uniform was switched to gray, both shirt and pants, while officers continued to wear the uniform previously described. Rank insignias and badges continued unchanged. Uniforms again changed in 1974, this time with fire fighters switching to navy blue for their shirts and pants, while lieutenants continued in the gray shirts and sergeants switched to a lighter blue shirt. The fabric of the officers' pants was changed to a polyester and cotton blend. Finally, in 1986, the styles currently worn by the department were adopted. The department's current uniform regulations (Appendix A) were issued (updated) 9-21-99. Rank designations continue to be denoted by badges, bars, and stripes.

The Madison Heights Fire Department has been in existence for 46 years. In that time, the members of the department have always worn a paramilitary style uniform. Any consideration



given to changing the department's uniform must be given careful consideration. As was stated earlier, the problem faced by the department is how to balance a desire for change on the part of the employees with how that change might be viewed by the public in terms of department image.

The Executive Leadership course offered at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland as part of the Executive Fire Officer Program provides units on developing decision-making skills, influencing, negotiation and persuasion, all of which may be drawn upon for this project's success.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

A review of current literature on the topic of fire service uniforms and the image they portray was undertaken at the Learning Resource Center of the National Emergency Training Center in Emmitsburg, Maryland. This literature review considered current articles in various fire service publications as well as a number of applied research projects on the topic completed for the Executive Fire Officer Program at the National Fire Academy, also located in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

There is an old adage that says, "You only have one chance to make a first impression." Alan Brunacini (1996), chief of the Phoenix, Arizona Fire Department writes directly on this notion. "Individual firefighter appearance creates a first impression that becomes the unspoken introduction, and beginning for the event." He goes on to write, "Having a fire department team show up all looking alike (that's why we call 'em uniforms), shaved, combed, standing tall, awake, and generally looking like they are serious is a pretty smart way to start doing business with the customer."

Brunacini prefers the softer, less militaristic look for fire department uniforms for two reasons. First, he believes the softer look creates a more positive and friendly reception. Second, he believes that the softer look may actually be safer, given, in his words “the violent, nutty environment our troops must currently deliver service in.” Krebs (1994) echoes a similar sentiment regarding fire fighter uniforms and personnel safety. He writes, “A person with an altered mental status due to drugs, alcohol or psychological instability is usually incapable of distinguishing whether you’re a police officer, fire fighter or EMT.” He, too, prefers the softer image conveyed by the polo-type shirt. Pagels (1989) offers, “To most of the public, seeing a military-style uniform tends to make one defensive in nature and, thus, a communication barrier could result.”

In making apparel decisions, while falling short of a specific recommendation, Arterburn (1994) offers the following consideration. “Every distraction facing the responder-whether it be weather conditions, fear of personal injury or impeded access to equipment-limits the focus placed on the patient or the task at hand.”

While there are those who champion the break with tradition that a softer image generates, many people still believe the military look best suits the needs of the fire service. In an applied research project submitted to the National Fire Academy, Smith’s (2000) research revealed that, “the general public prefers to see firefighters in a uniform consisting of a button up style uniform shirt with patches, badge, and a nametag.” Specifically, 87% of respondents to a survey he conducted, “felt that fire fighters should be in a traditional uniform consisting of a light blue button up uniform shirt and trousers.” Smith’s survey also revealed that an easily identified uniform and fire service patch were considered to be the most important components of a fire

fighter/paramedic uniform.

Writing as the California State Fire Marshal, Ronny J. Coleman has published a number of articles dealing with fire department uniforms and public image. Coleman (1991) writing on the narrow topic of the badge writes, “The badge is not just a piece of metal. It is a symbol that carries several hundred years of heritage and obligation.” Later in the same piece he opines, “No matter what its title, shape, size or design, it remains a part of the uniform to remind us of our obligation.” On the broader topic of fire department uniforms, Coleman (1995) writes that among other considerations, uniform selection should be based on the image that the department wants to convey to the public because “most communities tend to equate our image with our abilities.” Once more, writing on uniforms, Coleman (1997) writes, “Our public image is formed by the evaluation of our performance by others and a part of that depends on appearance.”

John Shiffert, executive director of the Professional Apparel Association conducted a survey at hospitals in San Francisco and Boston. The survey dealt with the attire worn by doctors and revealed that, “the amount of confidence patients have in their doctors could have a lot to do with attire.” In summarizing his findings, Shiffert (1987) wrote, “A recognized professional uniform can be assuring no matter what the occupation.” Finally, in a similar vein, Art and Betsy Sharp (1991) offer, “Worn appropriately, uniforms can connote professionalism, instill a sense of pride and confidence both in and by emergency responders, elicit trust from the people with whom responders deal, and possibly encourage closer working relationships with hospital personnel.” They also cite a fire fighter from East Longmeadow, MA, Jay Macsata, who believes that fully uniformed personnel have a calming effect on disaster and accident victims.

In summary, the literature review reveals differing viewpoints on the issue of fire fighter

uniforms and demonstrates a valid purpose for the undertaking of this applied research project. It will provide for the opportunity to receive input from the fire fighters of the Madison Heights Fire Department and the residents they provide service to, as well as to draw upon the body of work available on this topic.

## **PROCEDURES**

For data collection purposes, a simple, one-question survey with cover letter and color pictures of three different uniform styles were utilized. This survey was distributed to both the 38 members of the Madison Heights Fire Department who would be directly affected by any change in uniform requirements as well as 200 residents of the city of Madison Heights.

The survey sought to gain information on the preferences of both the fire fighters who wear the uniform as well as the public served by the fire fighters. In expressing a preference, the fire fighters were asked to keep in mind that any uniform selected should readily inform the public who they are and should be a source of both pride and professionalism. The members of the public were asked which uniform they would prefer to see when dealing with a member of the Fire Department.

### **Population**

Two distinct populations were surveyed for this project. First, surveys were distributed to the 38 members of the Madison Heights Fire Department via their personal departmental mailboxes. Those members were asked to return their confidential responses to the fire chief's mailbox not later than September 1, 2001. Second, surveys were mailed to 200 selected residents of the city of Madison Heights. Names and addresses for these survey recipients were selected from Madison Heights Fire Department incident reports filed between April 1, 2001 and July 31,

2001. Those residents selected had utilized the department's emergency medical service and were transported to a hospital as a result of the incident. These residents were selected in that an emergency medical response provided the resident an opportunity to see the personnel in uniform during personal interaction, where a fire response would have involved the use of personal protective equipment over the uniform. Residents surveyed were asked to return their response in the postage-paid envelope provided not later than September 7, 2001.

### **Instrumentation**

A one-page, single-question survey along with cover letter was distributed to both populations. Each group was also provided with color pictures depicting a department member in three different uniform styles. Those styles included a crew neck t-shirt screen-printed on front and back, a two-button polo shirt with collar, and the traditional, military style button-front shirt currently worn by the department. Those surveyed were simply asked to express a preference for one uniform style over the other two. Respondents were clearly informed that their responses could be made confidentially and that those responses would be utilized as part of an applied research project for the Executive Fire Officer Program at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland. Department members were asked to place their completed survey forms in the fire chief's mailbox while residents surveyed were provided with a postage-paid envelope for the return of their completed surveys.

### **The Instrument**

Question 1. Question 1, the only question utilized, asked respondents to review the attached pictures of the three uniform styles and then select the one uniform style they preferred by placing an "X" in the appropriate box on the survey form.

### **Assumptions and Limitations**

The scope of this project is limited to the appearance of and public image projected by uniform style. It does not nor is it intended to address factors related to fabric, construction or thermal protection.

### **Definition of Terms**

None.

## **RESULTS**

Two separate populations were surveyed in the preparation of this applied research project. The first population was the uniformed members of the Madison Heights Fire Department. Some members of the department had expressed an interest in uniform styles other than that currently authorized by the department, thus providing the impetus for this applied research project. All members of the department would be impacted by any change in authorized uniform regulations. The other population surveyed was the public served by the Madison Heights Fire Department.

On August 2, 2001, a single-question survey was distributed to the 38 members of the Madison Heights Fire Department that would be directly affected by any change in uniform requirements. Those members of the department were asked to review pictures of three different uniform styles and then select the one style that they preferred. Department members were then asked to place their confidential selections in the chief's mailbox not later than September 1, 2001.

Twenty-four members of the department responded, providing a response rate of 63.15% (24 of 38). However, 34 responses would be necessary to assure a 95% confidence level in the data collected (National Fire Academy, 1998). One response was discarded when it was revealed that

the respondent had selected more than one uniform style. Therefore, the percentages that follow are based on a total of 23 responses. Uniform style “A”, a t-shirt with screen-printing on the front and rear was selected by 13.04% (3 of 23) of the members. The golf-style polo shirt, style “B”, was the preference of 39.13% (9 of 23) of the members while style “C”, the traditional style button-front shirt with flap pockets currently worn by department members was the preference of 47.82% (11 of 23) of those responding. Three responses, including the discarded response contained handwritten notes expressing a preference for a summer/winter uniform schedule, a policy not currently utilized by the Madison Heights Fire Department. Members may wear long or short sleeves year-round as a matter of personal preference/comfort.

On August 22, 2001, the same one-question survey was mailed to 200 residents of the city of Madison Heights. Those residents selected had recent contact with the Madison Heights Fire Department, specifically emergency medical services calls. Names and addresses for those surveyed were culled from incident reports filed between April 1, 2001 and July 31, 2001. Again, recipients were asked to review three uniform styles and select the one style they would prefer to see when dealing with a member of the Madison Heights Fire Department. Residents were asked to respond via the pre-addressed, postage-paid envelope provided, not later than September 7, 2001.

Of the 200 surveys mailed, eight were returned as undeliverable. Therefore, the response rate for this survey is based on a population size of 192. Of that 192, 63 were returned providing a response rate of 32.81% (63 of 192). However, 128 responses would be necessary to ensure a 95% confidence level in the data (NFA, 1998). Again, as with the fire fighter survey, one response was discarded when it was revealed that the respondent had selected more than one

uniform style. Therefore, the percentages that follow are based on a total of 62 responses. Of those residents responding to the survey, 17.74% (11 of 62) favored style “A”, the t-shirt with screen-printing. Style “B”, the polo shirt, was the choice of 25.81% (16 of 62) of respondents while 56.45% (35 of 62) favored the traditional look of style “C”. Comments offered by residents responding included the notion that those in need don’t care what their helper is wearing, comfort should be the main concern, and the fire fighters should choose the style as they have to wear it.

The first research question in this project dealt with the factors that should be considered in the selection of fire department uniforms specifically as they relate to appearance and public image. The literature review brought forth important considerations including the safety of personnel, ease of identification and public trust and confidence. Along with these factors, the preference of both fire department personnel and the people they respond to were given a voice through the surveys conducted for this project. The preference of both groups is a prime factor to be considered.

The second research question dealt with what uniform style should be adopted. In this regard, the survey results play an interesting and important role. Employee interest in changing uniform styles was the primary impetus for this project. Yet, when given the opportunity to provide input, almost 37% (14 of 38) of department members failed to respond to the survey. Of department members responding, a plurality (47.82%) expressed a preference for the current, paramilitary style uniform. Among the public, a majority (56.45%) expressed a preference for the current paramilitary look. If the two groups of respondents were combined, the current style would be the choice of 52.87% (46 of 87) of those expressing a preference.



The third research question dealt with implementation of any uniform change. In a broad sense, the literature review reveals a number of cautionary notes in this regard, specifically that these changes be taken seriously, with a great deal of thought regarding the desired result as it relates to department image and public acceptance. From a practical standpoint, the Madison Heights Fire Department employees receive an annual uniform allowance with fire fighters receiving \$550.00 payable in two equal payments of \$275.00 in July and December. Officers receive \$570.00 annually, payable in \$285.00 installments. Therefore, any contemplated change should be phased in, concurrent with a uniform allowance payment.

### **DISCUSSION/IMPLICATIONS**

This applied research project represents an attempt to address an issue that has significant ramifications for the Madison Heights Fire Department. In part, it reflects an effort to address the desire of some employees for a change in uniform styles and to let those employees know that their desires are being heard. At the same time, the department must be concerned with the message it sends to its customers; that the Madison Heights Fire Department is a well trained, capable, professional emergency services organization, able to meet the needs of those customers. It is imperative that the department inspires confidence in and maintains the trust of those it seeks to serve.

The literature review conducted for this applied research project repeatedly brought forth the concept of the safety of personnel, specifically as it relates to the uniform they wear. This issue cannot be treated lightly. The safety of our personnel must always be of paramount concern. However, it cannot and should not be the sole determining factor in the decision-making process.

While the surveys conducted for this project did not address the safety issue and respondent

comments were not solicited or encouraged, many respondents did offer unsolicited remarks. It is noted here that none of those unsolicited remarks, including those from department members, addressed the issue of the safety of personnel as it relates to the uniform. Still the cautions contained in the writings of Brunacini, Krebs and Pagels cited earlier are duly noted here.

The survey of department members revealed only a plurality not a majority of members in favor of the current paramilitary style uniform. However, 37% of department members, when given the opportunity to express a preference, failed to do so. It is possible that their failure to respond is indicative of their acceptance of the current uniform style. A majority, 56.45%, of respondents to the public survey did express a preference for the current uniform style. In the citizen survey Smith conducted for his 2000 applied research project, the traditional uniform shirt with patches on the sleeves, badge and nametag was the preferred choice over five other styles including t-shirts and golf shirts. In addition, his survey revealed that respondents also felt the traditional uniform style was indicative of the highest level of medical training for paramedic personnel, was the uniform style most readily associated with a fire fighter/paramedic and portrayed the most professional image.

Recognition or ease of identification is another concern in the selection of uniform styles. While Krebs (1994) pointed out that persons in an altered mental state might have difficulty distinguishing police officers, fire fighters and EMS workers from each other, the traditional uniform style with badge does connote a position of authority. Certainly there are those situations in which this will work to our advantage. On this subject, Coleman (1997) writes, "Uniforms are legitimate symbols of authority, when the use of authority is appropriate." A respondent to Smith's 2000 survey brings the ease of identification issue down to a very basic,

yet very important level, by commenting, “I feel that firemen and paramedics should look very official so we can train our children to know who is a safe helper to them.”

Finally, there is the issue of public image. This issue encompasses the concepts of trust and confidence as well as the message delivered to the public by our manner of dress. Brunacini (1996) writing in favor of the softer approach states, “Such uniforms send more of a message that we are ready for action (like an athlete) rather than to control (like a police officer).” Just as importantly, Brunacini points out, “A lot of times we act out how we look.” If uniforms are used to present an image to the public, then we must be acutely aware of what that image is. Two respondents to Smith’s citizen survey offered these comments. The first respondent said, “You should look professional at all times. Tee shirts and golf shirts should only be worn at casual events” while another respondent remarked, “Polo or tee shirts would be appropriate for department picnics and parties, but when responding to calls they need to be professionally dressed as is necessary and appropriate.” The Sharps (1991) quote Billy Murphy, a former Boston emergency medical technician when he describes his encounter with Tampa, Florida paramedics following an automobile accident in which he was injured. “I was sure happy to see the fully uniformed ambulance crew show up at the scene.” He went on to add, “We assumed they knew what they were doing because they looked professional.”

It is clear that no single uniform exists to address all of these concerns. If such a uniform existed, every fire department in the United States would be dressed the same. Clearly, that is not the case. Therefore, how the decision on uniform styles is made is of the highest importance. Coleman (1995) offers some criteria to be considered in establishing a uniform policy. Among those criteria are:

1. What image does the department want to convey to the community?
2. Is it supported by both labor and management as being representative of the command presence and spirit of the organization?

In summary, from an organizational standpoint, two implications can be drawn. First, fire fighters in Madison Heights are currently wearing the uniform style selected by more survey respondents than the other styles offered. Second, any attempt to change uniform styles must be done in a conscious, thought-provoking manner, giving due consideration to the all of the factors elaborated in this project.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recommendations that follow are based upon the body of research compiled for this project and are made in response to the research questions established for it. They take into account the published material available on the subject that was reviewed for this work as well as data that was collected from surveys done in the completion of this project. It is imperative that the Madison Heights Fire Department act in a responsible manner to address the recommendations contained herein.

1. It is recommended that the Madison Heights Fire Department not make a uniform change at this time. The surveys conducted for this project reveal that a plurality of fire fighter respondents and a majority of citizen respondents favor the uniform style currently being worn by members of the department. However, these surveys also reveal that a majority of the fire fighters responding prefer something other than the style they currently wear. They simply do not agree on the replacement. Likewise, a significant segment of the citizen respondents, 43.55%, favor something other than the status quo.

2. It is further recommended that a uniform committee be established by the Madison Heights Fire Department to study the issue of department uniform policy. This committee should consist of both labor and management representatives and be charged with the task of making a uniform policy recommendation to the chief of the department. In this manner, all three research questions posed in this project can be addressed. The committee will be able to take an in depth look at the issue of personnel safety as it relates to how personnel are dressed. Labor and management will both be provided the opportunity to give their input on the issue of public image and the message that the department uniform should convey to the public. Issues not covered by this applied research may then also be discussed, specifically fire fighter safety as it relates to the fabric(s) of which station uniforms are made. A full airing of the issues encompassed by the National Fire Protection Association 1975 Standard on Station/Work Uniforms for Fire and Emergency Services may then be undertaken. Finally, if the committee recommends a change in uniforms, it may also address the method to be utilized in implementing such a change.

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## APPENDIX A

<u>ORDER</u> Administration	<u>SUBJECT</u> Fire Department Uniform Regulations		
<u>DATE OF ISSUE</u> 9-21-99	<u>EFFECTIVE DATE</u> As Indicated	<u>NUMBER</u> 1.17	
<u>REFERENCE</u>	<u>AMENDS</u>	<u>RESCINDS</u> 1.2, 1.13, & 1.14	<u>PAGE</u> 1 of 3

**FIRE DEPARTMENT**

*These uniform specifications are in keeping with a professional image and as a means of distinguishing individual qualifications and authority. The Madison Heights Fire Department shoulder patch is to be worn on both sleeves of all uniform shirts, commando sweaters, Gerber ZED 1999 jackets and dress uniforms. All Emergency Medical Technicians (basic and advanced) shall be required to wear a certification patch above the right hand shirt pocket. The City shall provide the Fire Department shoulder and EMT patches.*

**LIEUTENANT**

*Shall be required to wear white shirt with Epaulets, navy blue trousers, black plain toe shoes or boots (without ornamentation), black socks, black uniform belt, badge, name tag and Lieutenant bars on shirt collar and jacket lapels.*

**SERGEANT**

*Uniform specifications as described for Lieutenant, except the shirt will be medium blue and chevrons shall be worn to designate rank.*

**FIREFIGHTER**

*Uniform specification as described for Lieutenant, except the shirt will be navy blue and no rank insignias are worn.*

**FIRE MARSHAL**

*Uniform specifications as described for Lieutenant, except the trousers will be class "A" dress trousers and the rank insignia shall be the gold three crossed bugles.*

**FIRE INSPECTOR**

*Uniform specification as described for Fire Marshal except for rank insignia.*

*The department work uniform shall be Red Cap Wrangler Uniforms, and the preferred vendor for fire department uniforms will be:*

*Douglas The Tailor  
(810) 775-3738  
28561 Gratiot – Roseville, MI 48066*

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FIRE DEPARTMENT

<b>LIEUTENANT</b>		<b>FIREFIGHTER</b>	
SP 66 WH	Short Sleeve	SP 66 NV	Short Sleeve
SP 56 WH	Long Sleeve	SP 56 NV	Long Sleeve
<b>SERGEANT</b>		<b>PANTS</b>	
SP 66 MB	Short Sleeve	PT 10 NV	
SP 56 MB	Long Sleeve		

### **UNIFORMS/DAILY STATION WEAR**

The following items listed shall be acceptable daily station wear:

0800-1630 – Uniform shirt, approved department job shirt worn **over** the uniform shirt or approved department commando sweater with required patches, badge and name bar worn **over** the uniform shirt.

1630-0800 – Uniform shirt, approved department job shirt or T-shirt. In addition, the approved department commando sweater with required patches, badge and name bar may be worn **over** the uniform shirt.

Exceptions to this policy shall be at the discretion of the Fire Chief and/or Company Officers.

**WHEN RESPONDING TO AN ALARM, THE ONLY ACCEPTABLE OUTERWEAR SHALL BE TURN-OUT GEAR, THE UNIFORM SHIRT, JOB SHIRT, COMMANDO SWEATER OR GERBER ZED 1999 JACKET AS DICTATED BY THE NATURE OF THE RESPONSE. OUTERWEAR GARMENTS MUST HAVE ALL REQUIRED PATCHES AND OTHER INSIGNIAS.**

### **REQUIRED CLOTHING ITEMS ARE AS FOLLOWS:**

In addition to these requirements, all personnel shall maintain the semi-Pershing cap, black tie and upon successful completion of probation, a double-breasted full dress uniform and white shirt as prescribed for lieutenants. Service stars shall be worn on the left sleeve of the coat, one star for each five years of service. In addition, lieutenants shall wear one silver band on each sleeve and the fire marshal three gold bands. All personnel shall be required to have the navy blue Gerber ZED 1999 jacket with liner and fire department buttons (hood optional).



<u>ORDER</u> Administration	<u>SUBJECT</u> Fire Department Uniform Regulations		
<u>DATE OF ISSUE</u> 9-21-99	<u>EFFECTIVE DATE</u> As Indicated	<u>NUMBER</u> 1.17	
<u>REFERENCE</u>	<u>AMENDS</u>	<u>RESCINDS</u> 1.2, 1.13, & 1.14	<u>PAGE</u> 3 of 3

FIRE DEPARTMENT

**OPTIONAL CLOTHING ITEMS ARE AS FOLLOWS:**

1. Navy blue baseball style cap with embroidered Fire Department logo. Members may have last name and/or rank **only** embroidered on back of cap. Navy blue knit watch-style caps may be worn during the winter season.
2. Navy blue or white socks may be worn in place of black.
3. Navy blue commando sweater with shoulder patches, name bar and badge.
4. Navy blue mock turtleneck shirt with MHFD embroidered on left side of turtleneck. Sleeve length must match that of uniform shirt (No long sleeve turtlenecks with short sleeve uniform shirts). At no time will the mock turtle be an acceptable outer garment worn by itself.
5. Navy blue job shirts with denim collars and elbow patches may be worn under the following guidelines:
  - a. The job shirt shall be an optional garment for those wishing to purchase one.
  - b. The job shirt will replace current Fire Department sweatshirts. Current Fire Department sweatshirts may not be worn after December 31, 1999.
  - c. The job shirt will be acceptable outerwear subject to the Daily Station Wear guidelines.
  - d. The job shirt will have the department logo embroidered on the left chest. The member's name, department rank and level of medical training will be embroidered on the right chest. Command officers will wear appropriate rank insignias on the job shirt collars.

Department approved job shirts, T-shirts, mock turtlenecks and baseball caps may be purchased from:

Needles and Pins

Phone: (734) 459-0680

Fax: (734) 459-0680

P.O. Box 701603 – Plymouth, MI 48170

All orders in conflict herewith are hereby rescinded.

**Issued and Approved**

James E. Martin  
Fire Chief

**APPENDIX B**  
**Fire Department Survey with Cover Letter**

**(Letterhead)**

August 2, 2001

Dear Fire Department Member:

One way by which you distinguish yourself as a member of the Madison Heights Fire Department is by the uniform you wear. It is that uniform that should readily inform the public, the people you serve, who you are. Your uniform should also be a source of pride and professionalism.

Over the last few years, members of the Department have made inquiries regarding a possible change in uniform styles. In order to properly address these inquiries, I have elected to conduct an applied research project on the subject of fire department uniforms. This applied research project will be submitted to the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland as part of my coursework in the Executive Fire Officer Program.

Please take a few minutes to review the attached materials and then select the **one** (1) uniform style that you prefer. Your confidential selection should then be placed in my mailbox not later than September 1, 2001. Your selections will be an integral part of this project.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

James E. Martin  
Fire Chief

**UNIFORM SURVEY**

Please review the attached pictures of the three uniform styles shown and then select the one (1) uniform style that you prefer by placing an “X” in the appropriate box. Thank you.

Style A – T-shirt with screen-printing on front and rear.

Style B – Polo (golf-style) shirt with collar.

Style C – Traditional style button-front shirt with flap pockets.

Special notes: 1. All shirts are shown in short sleeves and are available in long sleeves for cold weather wear.

2. All shirts will display the member’s name with a rank and/or qualifications designation.

**Style A (Front)**



**Style A (Back)**



**Style B**



**Style C**



**APPENDIX C**  
**Resident Survey with Cover Letter**

**(Letterhead)**

Dear Resident:

Our records indicate that a person(s) at this address has had contact recently with the Madison Heights Fire Department. Based on your recent experience, I would be extremely grateful if you would take just a couple of minutes of your time to review the enclosed material and return your response to me.

How the members of the Madison Heights Fire Department present themselves to the people with whom they come in contact and how those people perceive members of the Department is very important. One way in which we distinguish ourselves is by the uniform we wear. The purpose of this survey is to present three uniform styles to you and ask you which style you would prefer to see when dealing with a member of the Fire Department.

I will use the survey responses received as part of an applied research project that will be submitted to the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland as part of the Executive Fire Officer Program.

Your input is vital to the success of this project and your response will be treated confidentially. Please take the time to answer the Uniform Survey question and return your response in the postage paid envelope enclosed for your convenience by September 7, 2001.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

James E. Martin  
Fire Chief

## UNIFORM SURVEY

Please review the attached pictures of the three uniform styles shown and then select the one (1) uniform style that you prefer by placing an “X” in the appropriate box. Thank you.

Style A – T-shirt with screen-printing on front and rear.

Style B – Polo (golf-style) shirt with collar.

Style C – Traditional style button-front shirt with flap pockets.

Special notes: 1. All shirts are shown in short sleeves and are available in long sleeves for cold weather wear.

2. All shirts will display the member’s name with a rank and/or qualifications designation.

**Style A (Front)**



**Style A (Back)**



**Style B**



**Style C**

