

# **Organizational Clothing**

## **And what it means to your unit and you.**

### **1) What is organizational clothing?**

Organizational clothing is CG-owned clothing that is issued to Coast Guard members by their units to perform their duties. Organizational clothing is only authorized to mitigate unusual situations, or to alleviate health and safety concerns.

Organizational clothing is not authorized to promote the appearance of the Coast Guard or its programs without prior approval of Personnel Service Center, Personnel Services Division-military uniforms branch (PSC-PSD-mu) in consultation with CG-843.

Organizational clothing is purchased, controlled, documented, and distributed by the units needing the item(s).

### **2) Understanding organizational clothing.**

Understanding Organizational Clothing is the first step to ensure that you, your unit, and financial officer remain on the good side of PSC, CG-84, FORCE COM (Compliance division), and the Federal Government as a whole. By following the provided steps you will be a better steward of the funds you manage. It will help ensure that your unit is in compliance when purchasing clothing items needed to mitigate unusual situations, or to alleviate health and safety concerns. It will also help prevent a ratification action being needed because of an inappropriate purchase.

### 3) The rules that govern organizational clothing.

Title 14 U.S.C § 477 provides that the Coast Guard may make "expenditures as are deemed appropriate for promotion and maintenance of the safety and occupational health of, and the prevention of accidents affecting, personnel of the Coast Guard, including the purchase of clothing, equipment, and other materials necessary thereto."

14 U.S.C. § 477 provides that appropriations available for the procurement of supplies and materiel or equipment are available for the purchase and maintenance of special clothing and equipment for the protection of personnel in the performance of their assigned tasks.

In order for an item of safety or special clothing to be authorized under the general authority of 14 U.S.C. § 477 as organizational clothing, it must meet all three tests below:

**a) The item must be special and not part of the ordinary and usual furnishings an employee may reasonably be expected to provide for him/herself.**

The above statement is referring to items within the seabag that enlisted members are paid Clothing Maintenance Allowance for and officers are given a onetime payment for. It is also referencing the basic items members maintain themselves (i.e. undergarments).

Examples of the above: Electricians gloves, Extreme cold weather parkas, Coveralls.

**b) The item must be for the benefit of the government, that is, essential to the safe and successful accomplishment of the work, and not solely for the protection of the employee.**

This statement basically means that units/programs cannot purchase items strictly for the member; the member must be engaged in Coast Guard work.

Example of the above: Office personnel do not normally need rain suits or coveralls for them to do their work.

**c) The employee must be engaged in hazardous duty.**

Statement C mandates that the member be engaged in work that is hazardous. Many of the basic jobs that we as Coast Guard members perform are hazardous and require special clothing.

Example: Boat Crews protective clothing and equipment is worn by personnel who routinely work as a member of a boat crew or as a member of a boarding team or inspection team.

**4) Be Vigilant! Remember you are the front line in saving the Coast Guard money.**

Organizational clothing is an unusually sensitive procurement area. Individuals responsible for purchasing organizational clothing are strongly advised to consult with their servicing procurement official to verify the appropriateness of intended organizational clothing purchases whenever there is any cause for doubt. All purchases of organizational clothing must be made in accordance with the Financial Resource Management Manual, COMDTINST M7100.3 (series) (FRMM), and Federal Acquisitions Regulations (FAR), Government Accounting Office (GAO), Principles of Federal Appropriations Law, Vol. 1, Article 4.C.13, and any subsequent Comptroller General Decisions.

It is key that ***ALL PURCHASES*** of organizational clothing be documented citing why the regular required uniform items do not meet needed health or safety requirements, and are not adequate to allow the member to accomplish their job. Once the unit and procurement office

have determined that organizational clothing is appropriate, a Determination and Finding outlining the rationale should be placed in the procurement file in order to ensure the decision history is available. Purchases not in accordance with these policies and decisions may result in a ratification action or the purchaser being held personally liable for the inappropriate purchase. Under FRMM, commanding officers may no longer authorize special clothing without the approval of Commandant PSC (PSD-mu) in consultation with CG-843.

Organizational clothing is Coast Guard unit-owned clothing that is issued to individuals. Generally, organizational clothing remains the property of the issuing unit and will be returned to the unit unless for sanitation reasons would not be reused. Items that are considered intimate, worn next to the skin, exposed to unsanitary conditions, chemicals, body fluids or sweat, or soiled beyond serviceability would not be reused. All organizational clothing items issued to personnel are accountable and will be entered on a Personal Clothing and Equipment Record (AF Form 538)

([http://www.uscg.mil/d13/diraux/docs/af\\_538.pdf](http://www.uscg.mil/d13/diraux/docs/af_538.pdf)) and returned to the unit when member is transferred. Items may be transferred with personnel to other units with appropriate documentation accounting on a Requisition and Invoice/Shipping Document (DD-1149) (<http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/infomgt/forms/eforms/dd1149.pdf>) for transfer to another unit. A copy of the AF Form 538 ([http://www.uscg.mil/d13/diraux/docs/af\\_538.pdf](http://www.uscg.mil/d13/diraux/docs/af_538.pdf)) will be forwarded to the reporting unit when the member is transferred.

Unless otherwise required, organizational clothing should be either **black** or a **dark blue** similar to the Coast Guard blue used in the ODU. Organizational clothing **will not** include unit specific markings, logos, or other decorative items unless specifically authorized in this Manual, or a waiver is granted by PSC-PSD-mu with (CG-843) concurrence. Organizational clothing with identification markings is authorized for personnel serving in positions where immediate identification is desirable for safety or to facilitate the performance of critical duties.

The authorization for identification markings includes personnel serving as instructors or trainers such as firearms or law enforcement self defense trainers, fire and damage control trainers, and other training positions involving potential safety or health dangers. It includes personnel serving in specifically designated primary law enforcement or emergency/rescue positions, and others with a specifically defined need for identification. Identification markings are intended to identify the function of the wearer and are separate and different from unit specific markings or logos.

**Request for organizational clothing waivers shall be submitted to PSC-PSD-mu through the appropriate program and Commandant (CG-843) for endorsements. Requests should be submitted by mail via Coast Guard Memo. A signed scanned copy of the request can be E-mailed in advance for urgent situations. If at all possible provide the details of the items you are looking to purchase and the vendor you are looking to purchase them from. PSC-PSD-mu is accumulating a list of common clothing items needed and used throughout the Coast Guard and their source of supply in hopes of standardizing/simplifying the purchase of the most common items used.**

Organizational clothing for Coast Guard civilian employees, contractors, or other Government agency civilian personnel is strictly limited to health and safety purposes and is not within the purview of this Manual.

**5) Where should you start when looking to purchase organizational clothing.**

a. The Financial Resource Management Manual (FRMM), COMDTINST M7100.3(series) is probably the best starting point, for it lists many of the items noted.

b. Chapter 2 and 11 of the Simplified Acquisition Procedures (SAP) manual, COMDTINST M4200.13(series) has good information

that list the priority that must be followed when purchasing organizational clothing. It also explains the policy considerations that shape it, and outlines factors to be considered in selecting the proper source.

c. The Federal Acquisitions Regulations (FAR) (Part 8) also list the various sources of supply in descending order of priority.

d. The Uniform Regulations, COMDTINST M1020.6 (series) gives an overall basic understanding of organizational clothing by taking in various parts of a), b), and c) above.

#### 6) **Other sources.**

a. The Rescue and Survival Systems Manual, COMDTINST M10470.10(series) provides authorization and policy for specific pre-approved lifesaving equipment and clothing used by personnel operating on or from boats.

b. The Helicopter Rescue Swimmer Manual, COMDTINST M3710.4 (series) (Appendix C) also provides pre-approved authorization and guidance on clothing that is used by rescue swimmers.

#### 7) **The end of an item.**

a. Remember all issued items must be returned to the division when a member transfers or is released from active duty. Items may be transferred to other units with the member if documented on the Requisition and Invoice Shipping Document (DD-1149). A copy of the AF-538 shall be forwarded to the receiving unit and a copy of the DD-1149 attached to the original AF-538 in the property file.

b. Chapter 1.B. of the Uniform Regulations should be reviewed prior to the disposal of uniform items to insure they are disposed of properly.

## 8) **Disclaimer.**

Due to many references being out of the control of PSC-PSD-mu (Uniform Branch), it is recommended that procurement personnel review the necessary references to ensure the guidance material they are using is current. As policies often change, this guide is a tool to assist members with regards to organizational clothing and is in no way meant to replace official regulations.

## 9) **Quick Review.**

- a. A need for special clothing has been identified.
- b. Ensure funds are available to purchase the items.
- c. Review section 5.K.21 of the FRMM and Section 4.D. of the Uniform Regulations to insure the item(s) meets the required rules.
- d. Start a folder NOW! To insure you have a detailed record of the purchase and the steps you used from cradle to grave.
- e. Is your item possibly covered in the Rescue and Survival Systems Manual or the Helicopter Rescue Swimmer manual? If so review these manuals for applicability.
- f. If your item(s) does meet the requirements to classify them as organizational clothing , then proceed.
- g. Draft a memo requesting approval from PSC-PSD-mu. The memo should address the three rules required that makes the item(s) proper Organizational clothing for purchase. The memo can be scanned and e-mailed or the hard copy mailed.

h. If approved by PSC-PSD-mu, you should pull out Chapter 2 of the SAP or Part 8 of the FAR to have the descending order of sources you are REQUIRED to use handy. Start going down the list.

i. Ensure you are looking for clothing that is Coast Guard Blue (Dark Blue) or if Dark Blue is unavailable Black should be purchased. These colors should be purchased whenever possible.

j. Once the item(s) you need are found, and is deemed the best value for the government, fill out a PR and have it approved by authorized personnel.

k. If approved, make the purchase.

l. While you wait for your new purchase to arrive go online and print the required AF form 538's to document who is issued the items and give them to the person who is going to issue the item(s).

m. Once the item(s) arrives ensure the order is correct. If so, gather all your paperwork (that should be neatly in your folder already) and file it for later reference.

n. Before an item leaves the unit, 7) above should be reviewed.