

# 102 – UNIFORM CODE OF CONDUCT

## Scope

All active members of the department that are emergency responders, support staff or participating in the CCFD Junior Firefighter Program shall be required to sign and date and have on file a copy of the *National Firefighter Code of Ethics* found in Appendix A. All such members shall conduct themselves in accordance with this code as well as the standards of conduct outline within this operational guideline at all times.

## Purpose

The goal of SOG 102 – Uniform Code of Conduct is to promote the professional image and conduct of CCFD personnel. To that end, a number of standards and guidelines must be established for the manner of dress, the appearance and the personal hygiene of personnel. Whether in or out of uniform this code must be established, reinforced by training, communicated often and enforced equally in all situations by the line officers of the department. Furthermore, these SOGs have been developed to guide the actions and decision-making of all members in regards to protecting department assets, maintaining good public relations and the protection of the general public's interests.

Additionally, with the rash of unethical and unlawful acts that have been highlighted in the news media in recent years, it has become increasingly evident that there is considerable need for a code of ethics within the American Fire Service. An alarming number of such cases have grown increasingly in frequency and severity, which has seriously undermined the public's opinion and trust in their local fire departments. Distrust leads to less and less support, especially financial support in the form of donations, for fire departments everywhere across the United States.

To mitigate this trend and to help protect the professional image of CCFD, all members shall be required to sign and date a copy of the *National Firefighter Code of Ethics*, which shall be placed in each member's personnel file. All shall members agree to adhere to and to be held accountable to this code or they shall be immediately removed from active duty and/support staff status. Any member or officer of the department found to be breaking the code of ethics or these standards of conduct shall be immediately suspended and a full investigation shall be completed.

Moving forward, it is a necessity for CCFD to conduct business honestly and with integrity. Taking this proactive action now will serve to further solidify CCFD's good public image. By adhering to the additional standards outlined below, the department will considerably improve its public image. By maintaining a stance of transparency and open communication with the general public, the department will continue to enjoy public support and a positive image with the general public for many years to come.

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## 102.01 – Code of Conduct

1. As a basic condition of membership, all members have an obligation to conduct their official duties in a manner that serves the public interest, upholds the public trust and protects the department's resources. To this end, all members have the responsibility to:
  - A. Perform their duties to the very best of their abilities and in a manner that is efficient, is cost-effective and meets the needs of the public;
  - B. Demonstrates integrity, honesty and ethical behavior in the conduct of all department business;
  - C. Ensures that personal interests do not come in conflict with official duties and avoid both actual conflicts of interest and the appearance of conflicts of interest when dealing with vendors, customers and other individuals doing business or seeking to do business with the department;
  - D. Ensures that all department resources, including funds, equipment, vehicles and other property, are used in strict compliance with department policies and solely for the benefit of the department;
  - E. Conducts all dealings with the public, county employees and other organizations in a manner that presents a courteous, professional and service-oriented image of the department;
  - F. Treats the public and fellow members fairly and equitably, without regard to age, color, disability, ethnicity, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation or any other factor unrelated to the department's business;
  - G. Avoids any behavior that could fall under the definition of misconduct in the disciplinary section of the CCFD Constitution & Bylaws; and
  - H. Reports for duty at the appointed time and place for training, fundraising and meetings, fully equipped, fit and able to perform assignments.
2. Officers and supervisors shall set an example for other members and have a responsibility to ensure that their activities and decisions pertaining to community services, personnel actions and management of public funds are consistent with the department's policies, procedures, guidelines and best practices.
3. All emergency responders and support staff shall be required to have included in their personnel file a signed and dated copy by the member of the *National Firefighters Code of Ethics*. These staff members shall also be held responsible and accountable for any breeches of this code. See Appendix A - Department Forms & Documents for the *National Firefighter Code of Ethics* document.

## 102.02 – Obedience to Orders

1. Members shall read and become familiar with the department's rules, regulations, policies, procedures and guidelines. No plea of ignorance of the rules and regulations will be accepted as an excuse for any violation.
2. Members shall promptly and willingly respond to the lawful orders of superior officers or acting officers. Refusal to obey a lawful order shall constitute insubordination. Obvious disrespect for or disruption of a supervisor's order likewise shall be deemed to be insubordination.

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3. Members shall abide by the federal and state law, local ordinances and rules as well as the department's general orders and rules of conduct. Members shall not be required to obey orders that are illegal or in conflict with the departments rules, regulations, policies, procedures and guidelines.
4. Members shall not publicly criticize (including the Internet) or comment derogatorily to any about instructions or orders received from a superior officer.
5. Supervisors and acting supervisors shall refrain from exceeding their authority in giving orders. The wrongful or injurious exercise of authority is prohibited.
6. Every officer, on and off duty, will be held responsible for enforcing the department's rules. If a violation comes to the officer's attention, that officer shall immediately notify the member of the violation and take corrective action. Should an officer fail to report a violation of an order or the department's rules, that officer shall also be held equally responsible for the violation.
7. Should a member receive an order that conflicts with a previous order, the member shall notify the officer who issued the conflicting order and shall be governed by the officer's subsequent instructions.
8. Any member who is given an order he believes to be unjust, improper or contrary to a general order or rule of the department or a federal, state or county policy should respectfully decline to obey the order and shall state the reason for doing so. The member shall request that the supervisor of the person issuing the order be contacted for instructions if the person issuing the order does not rescind or alter the original order.
9. A member may appeal for relief from orders or instructions that the member believes to be illegal, unjust or improper. See the appeals section of the CCFD Constitution & Bylaws for the department's policy on this matter.

## 102.03 – Professional Relations

1. Department members shall exhibit courtesy and respect to all officers and acting officers. While on duty, all officers shall be referred to by their proper rank (i.e. Chief Smith or Lieutenant Jones).
2. Supervisors shall exhibit courtesy and respect to their subordinates and shall not engage in horse-play or disrespectful conduct while on duty.
3. Members shall treat each other with due courtesy and shall not engage in horse-play or disrespectful conduct while on duty.
4. Members are required to speak the truth at all times, whether or not under oath, in giving personal testimony, in connection with official orders and in connection with official duties.
5. Members shall not make false reports concerning any department business or the personal character or conduct of any member.
6. Members shall exhibit courtesy and respect to members of the public and other Columbia Borough employees.
7. Members are required to give their full name and rank whenever requested by a member of the public (i.e. Firefighter Jane Doe or Chauffeur John Doe).
8. Should a member have a complaint against a member of the public, he or she shall forward the complaint in writing to the Fire Chief as soon as practical.

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## 102.04 – Personal Appearance

1. This rule applies to all members while on duty or officially representing the department at a public meeting, training session, class, seminar, conference or other similar event or function and whenever in uniform.
2. Members shall always maintain proper personal hygiene while on duty.
3. Uniforms and shoes shall be neat and clean and shall conform to the requirements set forth in SOG 102.08 – Uniforms or as specified by the Fire Chief.
4. When not in uniform, members who are on duty or who are representing the department shall dress in a professional manner that is appropriate for the occasion.
5. At no time while in uniform shall a member wear jewelry, pins, ribbons, buttons or an article of clothing that constitutes an advertisement; a religious, political or social viewpoint; or a message that is offensive to anyone on the basis of age, color, disability, ethnicity, national origin, race, religion, political affiliation, gender or sexual orientation.
6. Hair shall be kept clean and well-groomed, shall not constitute a safety hazard and at no time interfere with the use of protective clothing or equipment.
7. Beards and goatees are prohibited. Neatly trimmed sideburns and mustaches are permitted provided they do not interfere with the use of protective clothing or equipment. Sideburns shall not extend below the base of the ear and mustaches shall not extend below the bottom lip.
8. Emergency responders shall limit their use of jewelry to a wrist or pocket watch, a wedding ring and one school or university ring. These items shall not interfere with the proper use of protective clothing or equipment. Other items should not be worn, such as earrings, ear studs, bracelets, necklaces and other such items.
9. All other members may wear these items unless it causes excessive noise, interferes with safely performing work around the department's property or constitutes any kind of safety hazard.
10. Male members are prohibited from wearing earrings and/or ear studs when in Class A uniform. Female members, other than those emergency responders, shall limit the use of earrings and ear studs to a single pair. Nose jewelry, lip rings, tongue piercings or other items that draw undue attention to the wearer are also prohibited while in uniform.
11. For all other non-duty occasions, refer to the SOG 102.11 – Dress Code.

## 102.05 – Physical and Mental Fitness

1. All members are subject to release-to-work physical examinations before returning to duty from illness or injury. A medical release, signed by the attending physician, must be submitted to the Deputy Chief before returning to active duty.
2. All members shall remain mentally fit and able to perform their duties.
3. All members should remain physically fit in order to perform their duties.

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## 102.06 – Relief from Duty

1. All members shall remain at the station until properly relieved of duty by the Fire Chief or the OIC. It is the duty of each member responding to a call for services or participating in training to remain at the station to prepare department apparatus and equipment for the next call and/or training session. It shall also be required for all members in order to receive points for calls under the Columbia Borough Recruitment & Retention Program.
2. No member shall be relieved of duty until such time as all equipment has been properly cleaned and returned to a state of readiness. This includes, but is not limited to the following:
  - A. PPE
  - B. SCBA & masks
  - C. Hose
  - D. Tools
  - E. Ladders
  - F. Power equipment
  - G. Apparatus
  - H. Consumables such as oil dry, drinking water, etc.
3. All members shall be responsible for responding to any additional calls for services until properly relieved from duty by the Fire Chief or OIC.
4. Only members that have been injured may be excused from this standard or those that must be excused for employment purposes.
5. Any member exempted from duty for employment purposes shall not be excused until the appropriate late/absence letter has been written, signed and dated by the Fire Chief or OIC.

## 102.07 – Station Duty

1. The Captain is responsible for ensuring that the tasks assigned to the Lieutenants, 'Gear Checkers' and other personnel are completed in a timely manner and that the apparatus, equipment and station is clean and the department is capable of responding to emergencies.
2. Personnel on station, Duty Crews and Live-ins are expected to turn out within 60 seconds of receipt of an alarm.
3. The Captain may waive the assigned tasks accordingly when special circumstances warrant. Any activity not completed in such a situation shall be rescheduled for the next soonest possible date to be completed as soon as practical.
4. The Captain shall complete a Monthly Activity Report and the completed report shall be read at the department monthly meeting with copies being forwarded to the department Secretary and Assistant Fire Chief.
5. Drivers shall complete a run log after each time any of the apparatus leaves department property for any reason. Mileage must be recorded on a "run log" sheet so that it can be entered into Firehouse Software for reporting purposes.

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6. Prior to being relieved of duty, Duty Crews and/or Live-ins shall report all pertinent information to the crew relieving them.
7. PPE shall be stored properly on assigned racks at the end of a tour of duty and shall not be left on the apparatus or the apparatus room floor.
8. Firefighting staff on duty shall not watch television or engage in recreational activities during in-house training. Firefighting staff on duty shall not be permitted to sleep during in-house training.
9. The Captain is responsible for station operations and shall take appropriate measures to ensure that department fuel, utilities and supplies are used conservatively.
10. Whenever time permits, members are encouraged to devote their free time to physical fitness and personal study. Duty Crews and Live-ins may not engage in any activity that interferes with their ability to respond promptly to an incident.

## 102.08 – Uniforms

1. General requirements
  - A. It shall be the responsibility of each member to obtain and wear the appropriate uniform while on duty or representing the department at an official function. This rule also applies to support staff personnel that are on duty as a result of a large emergency incident or participating in some other department event such as fundraising.
  - B. Uniforms shall not be worn when off duty except as provided in this section.
  - C. Uniformed members of the department shall report for duty in the prescribed uniform designated by the Fire Chief or OIC.
  - D. Only uniforms approved by the department shall be worn while on duty or at other times identified herein as appropriate.
  - E. No part of the uniform shall be worn with non-uniform garments, nor shall non-uniform items be worn with the uniform.
  - F. Uniforms shall be kept clean, neat and in a proper state of repair. Faded, frayed and worn-out items shall not be worn as part of a uniform and should be replaced as soon as practical.
  - G. Jacket and shirt pocket flaps shall be buttoned at all times. Pockets shall be free of objects that create bulges or that otherwise detract from a professional appearance.
  - H. A member in uniform shall at all times wear a belt. Only department-approved belts may be worn with the uniform.
  - I. Shoes and boots shall be kept clean and polished at all times. Only department-approved shoes and boots shall be worn as defined in Section 2 of this standard. Tennis shoes (sneakers), loafers and other types of casual footwear may not be worn when in uniform.
  - J. Sleeves on long-sleeved shirts shall be buttoned at the wrist and shall not be rolled up.
  - K. For additional information and illustrations of the department approved uniforms, see Appendix B – Uniform Specifications.

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## 2. Uniform types

- A. *Class A, Full-Dress Uniform.* Class A uniforms shall be worn at funerals, weddings, award ceremonies, parades and other events as ordered by the Fire Chief. The uniform shall consist of the following:
1. Navy blue, double-breasted coat and matching trousers;
  2. Long-sleeved shirt, white for officers and light blue for all others;
  3. Navy blue tie and black belt;
  4. Black leather lace-up shoes or Wellington-style boots with black socks;
  5. Dress hat, badge and rank insignia;
  6. Medals, awards and ribbons centered above the nameplate;
  7. Gold nameplates for officers and silver nameplates for other members, centered on the right side of the uniform with the bottom edge touching the top edge of the breast pocket; and
  8. Plain white undershirt and/or garments.
  9. When serving as part of an Honor Guard, members shall attach one standard shoulder cord on the left arm. The color of the cord shall be gold for the Fire Chief, Deputy Chief, Assistant Chief, Captain and Lieutenants. The color of the shoulder cord for all other firefighting and support staff shall be silver.
- B. *Class B, Station Uniform.* Class B uniforms shall be the standard attire for fire prevention details, parades during warm weather and other events as ordered by the Fire Chief. The uniform shall consist of the following:
1. White shirt for officers and navy blue shirt for all other emergency responders and battle dress utility (BDU) trousers with leg drawstrings that complies with NFPA 1975, *Station/Work Uniforms for Firefighters*. BDUs shall have their drawstrings tied in such a manner that the pant leg is bloused at the top of the boots;
  2. For non-emergency response personnel, navy blue shirt and straight-legged trousers (the garments need not meet NFPA 1975 requirements);
  3. Short-sleeved shirts from 1 April to 31 October, long-sleeved shirts from 1 November to 31 March;
  4. Black belt and socks;
  5. Department-approved navy blue T-shirt;
  6. Department-approved navy blue baseball cap; and
  7. Department-approved shoes or boots that comply with ANSI Z41, *Standard for Safety-Toe Footwear*; or NFPA 1974, *Protective Footwear for Structural Fire Fighting*.
  8. Medals, awards and ribbons shall not be worn with the Class B uniform.
  9. The department's patch shall be worn on the left shoulder of the Class B uniform. An American Flag patch shall be worn on the right shoulder of the Class B. No other patches may be worn.

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- C. *Class C, Work Uniform.* Class C uniforms shall be the standard attire for all other occasions such as training, seminars, classes, fundraising and other official functions of the department or as ordered by the Fire Chief. The uniform shall consist of the following:
1. Department-approved navy blue T-shirt (from 1 April to 31 October);
  2. Department-approved navy blue hooded sweatshirt or job shirt (from 1 November to 31 March);
  3. Emergency responders shall wear navy blue (BDU) trousers with leg drawstrings that comply with NFPA 1975. BDUs may optionally be worn with the legs bloused at the top of the boots;
  4. Non-emergency responders shall wear navy blue, straight-legged trousers (the trousers need not meet NFPA 1975);
  5. Black belt and socks;
  6. Department-approved boots that comply with ANSI Z41 or NFPA 1974;
  7. Department-approved navy blue baseball cap may optionally be worn;
  8. Medals, awards and ribbons shall not be worn with the Class C uniform;
  9. No patches may be worn with the Class C T-shirt or hooded sweat shirt;
  10. Patches may be worn with job shirts with the following specifications:
    - A. The American Flag may optionally be attached, but shall only be on the right sleeve. If the American Flag is attached, no other patches may be attached to the right sleeve;
    - B. The department patch or PA Department of Health patch (for Basic Vehicle Rescue Technician and above or EMT and above trained personnel) or Office of the State Fire Commissioner Certified NPQS/IFSAC patch (for Pro-Board Certified personnel) shall be on the left sleeve;
    - C. The small Pro-Board Certified patch or small Fire Corps patch (for support personnel only) may optionally be sewn to the right chest above the radio pocket and name tape/embroidery;
    - D. Any PA Department of Health training rockers may optionally be attached to the left sleeve, but only below the large PADOH patch;
    - E. Any Pro-Board certification patches may optionally be attached to the left sleeve, but only below the OSFC NPQS/IFSAC patch;
    - F. Training certification patches may also be optionally attached, but only PADOH rockers will be worn with the PADOH patch or Pro-Board patches may only be attached with the OSFC NPQS/IFSAC patch.
    - G. Only the highest level of certification patches shall be used from each category if elected to be attached (i.e. Haz-Mat Operations instead of Awareness or Firefighter II instead of the Firefighter I patch, etc.).

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3. Rank insignias
  - A. Gold rank insignias shall be worn on the Class A uniform by the Fire Chief, Deputy Chief, Assistant Fire Chief, Captain and Lieutenants.
  - B. The officer's rank insignia shall also be worn on the collar of the Class B uniform (i.e. lapel pins).
  - C. All other firefighting personnel shall wear silver rank insignia on the Class A and Class B uniforms.
  - D. Support Staff personnel shall also wear silver insignia on the Class A uniform and no rank insignia on their Class B uniform.
  - E. Lapel pins shall be worn with the pin just touching the stitching on both sides of the shirt collar of the Class A and Class B shirts.
  - F. Gold badges shall be worn on the Class A and Class B uniforms by the Fire Chief, Deputy Chief, Assistant Fire Chief, Captain and Lieutenants.
  - G. All other firefighting personnel shall wear silver badges on their Class A and Class B uniforms.
  - H. Support Staff personnel shall wear a silver badge with their Class A uniform and no badge with their Class B uniform.
4. Physical fitness clothing
  - A. Members shall wear department-approved clothing while involved in personal physical fitness training, while on duty. The clothing shall include the department-approved navy blue T-shirt, navy blue hooded sweatshirt, navy blue shorts and navy blue sweatpants.
  - B. Members shall not wear unauthorized clothing during physical fitness training, while on duty.
  - C. Members shall don protective clothing, coveralls or uniforms prior to responding to a call for services, during a workout activity, while on duty.
5. Seasonal clothing
  - A. Navy blue or white thermal underwear and department-approved, navy blue long-sleeved T-shirts may be worn with the uniform as appropriate.
  - B. A department-approved jacket, coat or rainwear may be worn with the uniform as is appropriate.
6. Non-uniformed personnel
  - A. Support Staff personnel may wear civilian clothing during any official department function or while representing the department.
  - B. All clothing worn by Support Staff shall be clean, neat and appropriate for the occasion or as deemed necessary by the Fire Chief.
  - C. Nothing may be worn that could constitute a safety hazard or be offensive to another person on the basis of age, color disability, ethnicity, national origin, political or social affiliation, race, religion, gender or sexual orientation.
7. For additional information and specifications on uniforms, insignias, medals and accessories, refer to Appendix B – Uniform Specifications.

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## 102.09 – Vehicles & Equipment

### 1. General requirements

- A. Department vehicles and equipment shall be maintained in a constant state of readiness and availability for complete and immediate use.
- B. Members shall be responsible for the use and care of vehicles and equipment assigned to them or entrusted to their care.
- C. Members shall immediately report any loss, damage or malfunction of apparatus or equipment to the member's immediate supervisor. Damage, destruction or loss due to the member's negligence may result in his being required to make restitution. Disciplinary action may also be taken as deemed appropriate or necessary. However, if
- D. Members shall return vehicles and equipment issued to them or entrusted to their care immediately on separation from service with the department.
- E. A member required to drive a vehicle owned or operated by the department shall possess an appropriate and valid driver's license or department permit.
- F. Members shall drive in a safe and prudent manner and shall obey all applicable federal, state and local traffic regulations when driving or operating a vehicle owned or operated by the department.
- G. Members shall properly wear safety restraint devices whenever driving or riding in a vehicle owned or operated by the department. See also department SOP 004 – Seat Belt Policy.
- H. Members shall not use tobacco products while driving or riding in a vehicle owned or operated by the department. See also department SOP 005 – Tobacco Use Policy.

### 2. Use of department vehicles

- A. Vehicles owned or operated by the department shall be used for department business only. Department business means any authorized work or activity performed by a member on behalf of the department.
- B. An officer may authorize a brief stop at a convenience store or other similar establishment for a break while their company is within its district performing an authorized activity. The company must maintain radio contact and remain available for calls.
- C. Department vehicles may be used to procure meals or groceries for station meals while on duty. When obtaining groceries, a company must do the following:
  1. Maintain radio contact and remain available for calls.
  2. Send only one or two crew members (with a portable radio) into the store to procure the supplies.
  3. Make only one trip per duty shift (24 hours).

### 3. Taking vehicles home

- A. The following members are authorized to take a vehicle home: the Fire Chief, the Deputy Chief and the Duty Officer.

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- B. When circumstances warrant, the Fire Chief may authorize other members to take a vehicle home on a case-by-case basis.
4. Motor pool
- A. The department shall maintain a motor pool of vehicles for use by members while on duty.
  - B. The vehicles in the motor pool shall be staged at the department headquarters facility and the keys shall be kept by the Deputy Chief or the Fire Chief.
  - C. If a motor pool vehicle is unavailable, the Deputy Chief or the Fire Chief may authorize a member to use their personal vehicle. Members shall be reimbursed according to department and/or Columbia Fireman's Relief policies and procedures.
5. Injuries and property damage
- A. Any accident or collision involving damage to any vehicle or property or injury to any person shall be reported immediately to the appropriate law enforcement agency and to the member's supervisor.
  - B. The Safety Officer shall also be informed as soon as practical so that an accident investigation may be performed.
  - C. Failure to report an accident or injury constitutes a major infraction and shall carry at a minimum immediate suspension.

## **102.10 – Station Visitors**

1. Members are permitted to have visitors at the station.
2. Visitors are not permitted to enter a station dormitory or locker room unless necessary to access a restroom or other appropriate station facility.
3. Visitors are not allowed to enter a workshop or apparatus bay unless properly escorted by a department member.
4. When escorting visitors in the apparatus bay, members shall not allow children to play on, around or with emergency apparatus or equipment unless carefully and closely supervised.
5. Visitors shall not be allowed to disrupt training or other scheduled department activity. Their visits shall be limited to a maximum of 30 minutes.
6. Amorous activity with a visitor is not permitted while on duty.
7. Visitors are expected to abide by department rules and regulations while at the firehouse or other work sites.
8. Any visitor found to be willfully not complying with department rules and regulations will not be permitted on department property.
9. Minors shall at all times remain under the supervision and control of an adult.
10. Visitors are permitted to visit the firehouse once per month. If a visitor visits the station more than twice in a 30 day time frame, they will be required to fill out an application for membership with the department.

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## 102.11 – Dress Code

1. The department dress code shall apply to all members not in uniform at all times when participating in or performing an official fire line function on department property and/or out in the general public.
2. The department dress code shall apply to all members all of the time when they are in the apparatus bays for any reason. Also see the department SOP XXX – Engine Room Rules for additional details.
3. Members shall not wear any article of clothing or jewelry that promotes any group or organization that discriminates on the basis of age, color, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation or political views.
4. When attending or participating in an official fire line function such as training, public education or fundraising and whenever in the apparatus bays, members shall dress appropriately using the following guidelines:
  - A. Shoes must be worn at all times. No bare feet or open-toed shoes such as flip flops or sandals shall be permitted.
  - B. No cut-off t-shirts, t-shirts with ripped off or cut off sleeves, tank-tops or muscle shirts are allowed. Low-cut or revealing shirts or exposed bikinis or sports bras are not permitted as well.
  - C. No spandex or bike shorts are allowed. Shorts may be worn from 1 April to 31 October but must not be tight-fitting and the legs must come down to at least mid-thigh level.
  - D. Pants and shorts must be worn as they are designed, around the waist. At no time shall a member's under garments or pelvic area or buttocks be exposed.