

These FAQs are not intended as a substitute for the NOAA Corps Uniform Manual.

NOAA Corps ODU Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Why is NOAA Corps shifting to the ODU?

The decision to transition to an Operational Dress Uniform (ODU), was first precipitated by the Navy's proposal to eliminate the working khaki uniform in favor of the Navy's new camouflage working uniform. Because camouflage uniforms are not considered appropriate for the NOAA Corps, the UAB recommended the Coast Guard's all-blue ODU as the primary uniform for operational environments.

The transition to the ODU was also intended to help minimize the number of uniforms required in the officer's sea bag. With the implementation of the ODU, working khaki, coveralls, winter blue and various tropical uniforms have been eliminated. Secondly, the ODU leverages the Coast Guard's Uniform Distribution Center's (UDC) capability to process uniform orders. Finally, with the NOAA Tape, the uniform is better recognized as a NOAA Corps operational uniform.

Where do I have to wear the ODU?

Starting February 1, 2008, the ODU became the prescribed uniform for all locations outside the National Capital Region. The senior officer present maintains the responsibility to set the uniform of the day appropriate with the circumstances.

Will the service khaki continue to be an alternate uniform?

Yes. However, the ODU is the primary uniform outside the National Capital Region, and its wearing is intended for operational settings. Service Dress Blue, Service Khaki and Summer White remain alternative uniforms depending upon the season of the year. The NOAA Corps Director continues to allow officers to wear either the prescribed or alternate uniforms in shore staff locations. The senior officer present may designate a single uniform to be worn for special occasions or events.

Will the NOAA Corps be going to the non-tucked version in the future like the USCG?

Yes, but the tucked version is the only ODU currently authorized for NOAA Corps officers. The Coast Guard will slowly transition to the non-tucked version, and further decisions about the timing of NOAA Corps transition to the non-tucked version are not likely until 2010. CPC will continue to monitor the situation, and if a shortage of "old-style" becomes a major issue, transition to the tucked-out version of the ODU may be accelerated.

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Can I wear a ship ball cap with the ODU?

Unit Logos Ball caps with specific unit logos may only be worn in uniform while attached to the unit to which the logo refers.

Unit ball caps are of the commercial ball cap type in the same approximate colors as the issue ball cap. Rear adjusting tabs are authorized. Unit name, location, and hull numbers may be permanently affixed to the front face of the cap allowing room for the *required rank insignia*. No additional lettering, logos, or artwork is allowed. Lettering and “scrambled eggs” are as described for the issue ball cap (NOAA Corps Uniform Regulations, Chapter 4.A.2.a). Also, the ball cap must be Navy-style, and not made of a soft, collapsible material.

Do I have to wear the Super Boot?

No. Any black combat-style boots may be worn with the ODU, as long as they are in good condition.

Safety shoes (not necessarily the Super Boot offered at the Coast Guard’s Uniform Distribution Center) must be worn while performing work that requires protection of the feet. The safety shoes are high top (plain black, 8” to 10” high) safety boots with a reinforced safety toe. Protective footwear must comply with the National Safety Council’s American National Standard Institute (ANSI) Document Number ANSI Z41-1999 or F2413-05. Boots meeting either of these standards will attach a label inside the boot confirming compliance (NOAA Corps Uniform Regulations, Chapter 4.A.7).

When conducting small boat or ship operations, boat shoes or black low quarter shoes may be worn. Boat shoes shall have the following characteristics: Dark brown leather low cut shoe of moccasin type construction, and functional rawhide lacing with 6 to 10 brass eyelets (evenly divided per side). The sole shall be slip resistant and made of non-marking material. Black low quarter shoes may also be worn aboard small boats or ships. The discretion to allow low quarter or boat shoes rests with the ship’s commanding officer or small boat OIC.

What shoes do I wear with the ODU shorts?

Either of the shoes authorized with the ODU trousers are also authorized for wear with the ODU shorts.

Where can I wear the ODU shorts (See ODU Uniform Matrix below)?

ODU shorts may be worn when the ship is underway, but not when entering or departing from port. ODU shorts are a CG blue variation of the ODU. They have two hip pockets, two back pockets with flaps, and two expandable cargo pockets with flaps. Short waist is adjustable. The ODU short is a converted ODU trouser sewn one inch below the expandable cargo pockets (NOAA Corps Uniform Regulations, Chapter 4.A.5).

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Am I allowed to take off the ODU top (See ODU Uniform Matrix below)?

Local commands may authorize temporary removal of the blouse during high heat situations aboard ship and in field operations. The T-shirt remains tucked into the trousers and must be of an authorized type (NOAA Corps Uniform Regulations, Chapter 4.A.4).

When will ODU Dive, SWO and other badges be available?

CPC is currently coordinating with the Coast Guard's Uniform Distribution Center to make the embroidered insignia (dive, deck officer, aviator, command) available. CPC will release a report when this process is complete. Metal qualification insignia is authorized to be worn on ODUs unless, during certain working conditions, the metal insignia would represent a safety hazard.

A single embroidered insignia is worn on the ODU. The single insignia should represent the highest earned or most current qualification. A command insignia may be worn only by officers who are currently serving in a commanding officer position.

Sew the insignia directly above the NOAA Corps identification tape using thread the same color as the background of the insignia. Sew on the insignia by machine or hand at a minimum of six stitches per inch. The width of qualification insignia embroidered patches should extend ¼ inch beyond the end of the embroidered device (NOAA Corps Uniform Regulations, Chapter 4.A.13).

Is the float coat authorized to be worn with the ODU (See ODU Uniform Matrix below)?

Yes; the float coat may be worn only in lieu of a PFD. Otherwise, the foul weather parka, windbreaker are the authorized upper outerwear.

Can I wear a sweater with the ODU?

No. The fleece parka liner that accompanies the ODU jacket may be worn by itself, either indoors as a sweater or out of doors as a stand-alone jacket.

Who do I contact if I have additional questions about the correct wearing of the ODU?

First, visit the NOAA ODU websites located at CPC's home page (<http://www.noaacorps.noaa.gov/cpc/index.html>). Also, please see the Coast Guard's ODU website (http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-w/g-wp/udc/ODU_Uniform.html). If you have additional questions after reading this information, call CPC at 301-713-3444.

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Permissible ODU Uniforms Matrix				
	Underway	Entering/departing port & alongside pier	Off ship & working alongside on base	Off ship & working off base (including commuting)
ODU w/ blouse and trousers	X	X	X	X
ODU with trousers and blue undershirt	X			
ODU with shorts and blue undershirt	X			
ODU with float coat	X	X		
ODU with parka	X	X	X	X
ODU with windbreaker	X	X	X	X
ODU with parka liner only	X	X	X	X
ODU with float coat when conducting operations requiring a PFD	X	X	X	X
Any of the above uniforms with boat shoes	X			