

- I. Policy
- II. Procedures
- III. Undercover Operations

- I. Purpose

This Directive establishes policy and procedures for the recognition of plain clothes personnel, i.e., a sworn employee of any law enforcement agency or the Military District of Washington, by uniformed personnel.

- II. Policy

The Division's policy is designed to reduce the hazards inherent in confrontational situations between uniformed and plain clothes law enforcement personnel, and to provide for the safe recognition of officers working in a plain clothes assignment when confronted by uniformed personnel.

- III. Procedures

- A. Personnel identification

1. Officers in plain clothes will, when present at crime scenes, calls for service, or whenever it is necessary to be prominently identified, conspicuously display their badge. Additionally, a police arm band or raid jacket displaying the Division's badge or patch may be worn. Ball caps are not an approved form of alternative identification.
2. When an officer in plain clothes is the first to arrive at an incident scene, notification will be made immediately to the Division's Communications section thereby alerting responding uniformed officers of the presence of plain clothes personnel.
3. Personnel working plain clothes assignments, but not undercover, will carry their badge and credentials with them at all times.
4. Personnel who are off duty and carrying a firearm will carry their badge and credentials with them at all times.

- B. Challenging Personnel

1. Officers will use extreme caution when confronting suspected plain clothes personnel. A position of advantage (cover) should be attained prior to issuing a challenge.
2. Officers will state in a loud and clear voice "**Police -- don't move.**" This challenge should be used in all situations for simplicity and uniformity.
3. Officers will proceed with caution until the subject's identity has been confirmed.

4. Officers receiving the tentative recognition signal (see Section D. below) from a subject under their control will regard the signal only as an indication that they **may** be dealing with a law enforcement officer.
5. Officers will exercise sound judgment in determining whether to protect the role of a plain clothes officer by treating him/her as a suspect in the presence of others.
6. Once the recognition signal is received, and the situation is controlled and stabilized, the challenging officer should then request further identification from the challenged person before proceeding accordingly.

C. Challenged Personnel

1. Upon being challenged, officers will remain motionless unless given a positive command otherwise.
2. Officers will obey the commands of the challenger, whether or not he/she is in uniform. This may entail submission to arrest.
3. Officers will not attempt to produce identification unless instructed to do so.
4. If circumstances permit, officers may verbally announce their identity, and state the location of their badge and credentials.
5. Officers should ask the challenger to repeat any directions or questions that are unclear. The challenged officer should never argue with the challenger.
6. Challenged officers will follow all instructions received until recognition is acknowledged.
7. Officers will utilize the recognition signal described below in Section D. when directed by a fellow officer to raise his/her hands.

D. Tentative Recognition Signal

1. When directed by a uniformed officer to raise their hands over their heads, officers in plain clothes will immediately comply by straightening their arms over their heads, crossing them at the wrists with the palms forward and the fingers widespread.
2. When challenged by a member who is not in uniform, the challenged officer should use his/her own judgment as to whether the tentative recognition should be used.
3. A uniformed officer receiving this signal will regard it only as a tentative indication that he/she may be dealing with a fellow officer. Accordingly, the challenger will proceed with caution until positive confirmation of identity occurs. The challenged officer will follow instruction exactly until recognition is acknowledged and confirmed.

E. Notifications

When interaction with another law enforcement agency utilizing plain clothes personnel is likely and the operation will not be compromised, notification of the activity should be made to the affected law enforcement agency's communications unit.

IV. Undercover Operations

Generally, no uniformed officer will visually or verbally recognize an officer in plain clothes unless the recognition is initiated by the plainclothes officer. Undercover personnel will not be required to carry police identification. When undercover personnel become the subject of police action, they will comply with the uniformed officers' instructions giving the "Tentative Recognition Signal." If necessary, they will submit to an arrest. Once removed from the scene of the incident to a police facility, they will fully identify themselves when it is safe to do so.

**Approved Park Police Document  
Signed Original on File**

**End of Directive**