

L2 Auxiliary Leadership Link

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To: All Auxiliarists



When Members of the Coast Guard Auxiliary May Wear the
Coast Guard Auxiliary Uniform

Good day shipmates,

From time to time questions arise with respect to when wearing the Coast Guard Auxiliary uniform is authorized. The Auxiliary Manual at chapter 1 section A.4.a provides that “Uniforms shall be worn as prescribed in Coast Guard Uniform Regulations, COMDTINST M1020.6 (series), except as noted in Chapter 10.” The policies at chapter 10 of the Auxiliary Manual and subsequent guidance documents contain the policies that instruct as to what uniforms we may wear, how they are to be worn, and when they may be worn.

The overarching Coast Guard policy is that an Auxiliarist may only wear the Auxiliary uniform when assigned to duty. The Auxiliary Manual provides some examples of when Auxiliary uniform wear is prohibited, but whether or not specifically prohibited, uniform wear is only authorized when assigned to duty.

“Assignment to duty” is addressed in the Auxiliary Manual at chapter 5 section J. as follows:

“The Commandant employs the services of qualified Auxiliarists in support of various Coast Guard programs. To this end, specific Auxiliary activities are authorized in support of Auxiliary programs or Coast Guard units. An Auxiliarist performing such duties is considered to have been assigned to duty within the meaning of 14 U.S.C. [§§3912 and 3903a] when these activities have been authorized and clearly communicated verbally and/or in writing by appropriate authority.”

The Auxiliary Manual, other manuals, guidance documents, SOPs, Letters and Instructions, are all “writings” that may function to assign us to duty. Written or oral orders are not necessarily required to be assigned to duty, although for certain Auxiliary activities, (e.g. surface or air operations), orders from an authorized Order Issuing Authority (OIA) are mandatory for assignment to duty.

An Auxiliarist is assigned to duty when 3 prerequisites are satisfied:

- The Auxiliarist is engaged in an activity in support of an authorized Auxiliary program.
- The Auxiliarist is qualified to engage in that activity in accordance with CG or CG Auxiliary policy.
- The Auxiliarist is performing the activity in conformity with applicable CG or CG Auxiliary policy (i.e. the Auxiliarist is acting within the scope of duty).

When those three criteria are met, then, and only then, the Auxiliarist is assigned to duty. Also, it is only then, that an Auxiliarist is deemed an employee of the United States, and eligible for the federal statutory protections described more fully by the Auxiliary Manual at chapter 5 section J.

Many examples of authorized activities are given at Table 5-1 on page 5-50 of the Auxiliary Manual, but given the “Semper Gumby” nature of the Coast Guard and Auxiliary, that list is by no means intended to be all-inclusive.

Chapter 10 section A of the Auxiliary Manual specifically authorizes wear of the Auxiliary uniform as follows:

- Auxiliarists onboard vessel facilities during an ordered mission and Auxiliarists involved with mobile radio facility operations and shore-side harbor patrols.
- Vessel Examiners conducting vessel safety checks.
- Pilots, air observers, and aircrew on ordered missions in aircraft facilities.
- All instructors (IT) and assistant ITs in public education classes.
- Auxiliarists serving as Recreational Boating Safety Program Visitors.
- Auxiliarists travelling on any Coast Guard or military air or surface craft if so prescribed by the local commander.
- Auxiliarists for whom an Order Issuing Authority (OIA) has prescribed an Auxiliary uniform as a condition for assignment to duty.
- Auxiliarists interacting with, acting on behalf of, or representing the unit when assigned to duty
- Auxiliarists when performing duty on a Coast Guard vessel.
- Wearing an appropriate Auxiliary uniform by active or retired Auxiliarists for formal and ceremonial occasions events with a military or Auxiliary nexus that require formal wear.
- During military ceremonies such as retirements, changes of command, funerals, patriotic parades on national holidays or occasions in which active or Reserve personnel are taking part or social and other functions when the invitation has been influenced by the member's military service.
- At civilian, military, and Auxiliary ceremonies and events that are clearly military service-centric in nature (e.g.,military changes of command; Auxiliary changes of watch; military and Auxiliary retirements; Coast Guard Foundation dinners; local community banquets in honor of military services; patriotic parades on national holidays; funerals of military veterans and Auxiliarists) and which require a uniform.
- Certain formal Auxiliary events like changes of watch, conferences, and banquets recognized as falling within the general scope of military ceremony.

Uniform wear is prohibited unless specifically authorized, but as noted, there are certain occasions when uniform wear is specifically prohibited by the Auxiliary Manual, including:

- In places of dubious reputation where the uniform might be discredited or disgraced.
- When engaged in political activities.
- During paid employment or sports.
- Aboard an Auxiliary vessel or aircraft facility unless the facility is on an authorized patrol.

- Entry to or while present in a foreign country or territory unless specifically authorized by an appropriate Coast Guard authority.

Authorization may be granted in the following cases:

- A scheduled patrol or deployment that might enter foreign territories.
- An authorized SAR mission involving foreign borders or territories.
- Deployment or guest status aboard a Coast Guard cutter or aircraft that enters foreign territory.
- Visiting a foreign country as an Auxiliarist on official business.

Except as authorized in the Auxiliary Manual, Auxiliary uniforms may not be worn for any personal ceremony or event (e.g., an Auxiliarist may not wear an Auxiliary uniform for their own wedding, college graduation, vacation, etc.).

Auxiliarists may not wear any distinctive part of the uniform or official Auxiliary insignia with civilian clothing when not assigned to duty. This includes Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that is marked with wording that includes, "USCG Auxiliary" or any version thereof (e.g., life jackets, cold weather gear).

If ever in doubt, before donning the uniform, seek guidance from your elected unit leader.

Semper Paratus

Very respectfully,

Agostino "Gus" Formato, National Commodore

U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary