

**Navy Working Uniform Concepts Talking Points/
Frequently Asked Questions
Updated 21 December 2012**

These FAQs were developed as part of the NWU concept development and wear test in 2005. For updated information regarding the manner and occasion for wear of the NWU, please refer to the latest NWU and Uniform Update NAVADMINs found at <http://www.public.navy.mil/BUPERS-NPC/SUPPORT/UNIFORMS/Pages/default2.aspx>.

Primary communication points

- Before we talk about specific uniform changes – it’s important to understand *why* we’re working toward a uniform change.
- Sailors recommended to their chain of command that we needed a uniform change, so we started by surveying the fleet. Received more than 40,000 inputs from Sailors in the fleet. Also 5,500 pages of single spaced recommendations from Sailors.
- We went to organizational psychologist to help us understand *exactly* what our Sailors were telling us. What they said – is you think that we have too many uniforms in your seabag. And the ones that we have aren’t always practical for the work environment we expect you to work in.
- The Navy Working Uniform concepts will be wear-tested this winter, at various commands both at-sea and ashore around the fleet. The final new year-round wear working uniform will be developed using the data collected from this wear test.
- The Navy Working Uniform is being designed to take the place of utilities, wash khaki, coveralls, woodland green, aviation green, winter working blue, and tropical working uniforms. The normal wear life is designed to last up to 18 months, compared to the current wear life of six months for the working uniform.
- TFU has developed some ideas, and I want you to think of these uniforms like a concept car at an auto show. Not one of them is intended to be the final product. Even if you’re not actively involved in the wear test, we’re going to outfit our Navy Uniform shops with examples of the wear-test uniforms.
- After about 30 days from the start of the wear test, we’re going to open up for another fleet-wide survey so you can tell us if you like this color or that color, do you like pockets here or no pockets, do you like a rounded collar or a pointed collar. Based on your inputs from that, it will help us come up with the final product.
- If we don’t have it right, we’re not going to implement it. The fleet is the one we’re responding to on this. Our Sailors are the ones who said that we have too many uniforms. You’re the ones who told us to do the survey in the first place. What we’re

trying to do is make sure that we're listening to you and making sure that we get this right and we're going to need your help to make sure that we do get it right.

PROPOSED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

Why are we doing this? Why a new working uniform?

One of the four main objectives to the Task Force Uniform charter, which was signed out by VCNO in February 2003, was to develop a working uniform for wear at sea or ashore, across all communities, from E-1 through O-10. The more than 40,000 Sailors who took part in the fleet-wide survey told us that the current working uniforms are not practical for the Navy working environment, are too costly and difficult to maintain, and do not reflect a professional military appearance. The majority of those surveyed said they preferred a BDU-style uniform.

What is the plan for wear-testing the Navy Working Uniform concept?

The fleet-wide wear test, currently underway, will be conducted at commands around the world, and across the spectrum of different platforms. Approximately 600 participants, both male and female, officer and enlisted, will wear-test these concept uniforms at each of the following commands/locations:

USS Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group (Norfolk, Va.)
USS Tarawa (San Diego, Calif.)
USS Germantown (San Diego, Calif.)
USS Chung-Hoon (Pearl Harbor)
USS Iwo Jima (Norfolk, Va.)
USS McFaul (Norfolk, Va.)
USS Philippine Sea (Mayport, Fla.)
USS San Francisco (Guam)
VP-1 (Whidbey Island, Wa.)
VAQ-137 (Whidbey Island, Wa.)
VP-26 (Brunswick, Maine)/Aviation Intermediate Maint. Dept. Brunswick, Maine
Afloat Training Group (Norfolk, Va.)
Afloat Training Group (San Diego, Calif.)
Recruit Training Command (Great Lakes, Ill.)
Master at Arms "A" School, (San Antonio, Tex.)
Special Warfare Logistic Support Group, (San Diego, Calif.)
Naval Mobile Construction Battalion, (Port Hueneme, Calif.)
Amphibious Construction Battalion Two, (Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek, Va.)
Naval Station Rota, Spain
Naval Air Facility Atsugi, Japan
Naval Coastal Warfare Squadron 25, (Norfolk, Va.)

When will we see this new uniform implemented in the fleet?

After the completion of the six-month wear test, the data will be collected from the fleet-wide survey, and results and recommendations will be brought to the CNO. The final decision on the Navy Working Uniform will be made by CNO, and *if* a final version is approved, the goal will be to phase in the new uniform to Sailors in the fleet within 18-24 months from that point.

How much will the new uniforms cost Sailors?

The cost of the new working uniform will be determined once the decision has been made on the final uniform. The four concepts offer different features, including separate options on pockets and closures, various fabrics, and footwear. Until a decision is made on the final version, prices for the working uniforms cannot be set.

However, the normal wear life of these uniform concepts are each designed to last up to 18 months, compared to the current working uniform wear life of six months. This means significant savings in maintenance and replacement costs for Sailors.

Why these colors?

We wanted to choose colors that would be distinguishable to our naval service, to give our Sailors a recognizable uniform apart from other services and appropriate to the maritime environment. The colors we chose were haze gray, deck gray, navy coverall blue, and black. The name tapes on these uniforms will be gold for chiefs and officers and silver for E-1 through E-6 members.

By using colors that are traditional Navy colors, we continue to uphold our naval heritage, while giving our Sailors a uniform that is much more practical for our working environment.

Why the 'camouflage' pattern?

The concept uniforms are not intended to be 'camouflage' uniforms as is the case with similarly patterned uniforms of the other services. We have no need for camouflage. However, by learning from our past working uniforms as well as the uniforms from other services, the Navy realized that a solid cover uniform shows heavy wear areas much more predominantly than a multicolored pattern.

The solid color uniforms also show wrinkles in the fabric more predominantly and often a small stain or spot of paint renders a solid colored uniform not wearable. A multicolored uniform alleviates those problems as well.

The wear test will offer a chance to evaluate a traditional woodland pattern and a modern digital pattern for the working uniform.

What about Sailors who operate in tactical environments, such as Seabees, SEALs?

The NWU concept is designed to be a working uniform, not a tactical uniform. When Sailors are working in tactical environments, such as the desert, or in the field, they will still be outfitted with the appropriate tactical uniforms. Part of the working uniform will include a Gore-Tex parka as well as a turtleneck sweater to protect against adverse weather conditions.

Will Sailors be allowed to wear this uniform off base?

Yes. This uniform is being designed to be authorized for wear off base while commuting to and from work, but not on liberty.

What about maintenance/care of these uniforms?

These year-round uniforms are intended to be wash-and-wear. Future Navy ships are being built without dry cleaning facilities; Sailors did not like the idea of putting an iron to a uniform in which they are going to be doing heavy work.

By being able to take a uniform straight from the dryer and put up on the hanger for daily wear is much more practical and appealing to both Sailors' busy schedule and pocketbook.

In addition, the camouflage pattern will permit mending of small rips in uniform fabric, saving Sailors considerably in replacement costs.

What about shipboard fire safety? Or visibility and floatation in case of a Sailor falling overboard?

No current Navy uniform in the seabag was developed purposefully to fight a shipboard fire or to enhance visibility or floatation in the water. Every Navy ship is equipped with Fire Fighting Ensemble (FFE) and necessary personal protective equipment to combat shipboard fires, as well as floatation gear with flares and dyes for those purposes.

What about the wear test survey?

Sailors will be asked for their opinions of the concept uniforms approximately 60 days after the wear test begins. This survey will be available electronically; all Sailors will be allowed to participate regardless if they have worn or seen the actual concept uniforms first-hand.

Task Force Uniform will take into account feedback from our Sailors to help design the best possible uniforms for the present and future needs of our Navy.

Throughout the process, the feedback Task Force Uniform receives from Sailors will influence working uniform wear policies, most of which will be driven by the outcome of the wear test.

Can I wear my command ball cap?

Command ballcaps have already been wear tested in the fleet, so they will not need to be included in this wear test. During the wear test, only two covers will be tested, the round cover and the eight-point cover, both in the digital and woodland patterns. No current uniform covers

will be worn in the wear test. The wear of command ballcaps will be addressed when the final wear policies are decided.

How will the wear policy for these uniforms be decided?

The wear policy will be developed through convention and wear test, and will not be finalized until all of the feedback and data have been fully evaluated.