

# General Order

## Houston Police Department



ISSUE DATE:

February 22, 2021

NO.

400-02

REFERENCE: Supersedes all prior conflicting Circulars and Directives, and General Order 400-02, dated June 19, 2018

**SUBJECT: HPD BADGES AND IDENTIFICATION CARDS**

### POLICY

Employees shall not alter, duplicate, modify, substitute, exchange between employees, or transfer to another person their department issued HPD badge, HPD hat shield, or official identification (ID) card, unless otherwise authorized in this General Order or approved by the Chief of Police.

Employees shall not use any badge, hat shield, or ID card that does not conform to department policy or specifications. All department issued equipment remains the property of the department and shall be carried and used only as issued and authorized.

This General Order applies to all employees.

## 1 BADGES AND IDENTIFICATION CARDS

### Issuance

The Employee Services Division (ESD) is responsible for issuing employee ID cards. The Investigative & Special Operations, Transfers, Allocations, and Promotions (TAP) Unit, is responsible for issuing, maintaining, and ordering HPD badges and HPD hat shields.

### Identification and Recognition

Employees shall carry their ID card with them while on duty, wearing a department uniform, performing police-related extra employment, or on police property (see General Order 400-22, **Keys, Passwords, and Personal Identification Numbers**). Officers who are not in uniform and who are acting in an undercover capacity are exempt from this requirement, although officers in plainclothes and civilian employees are always required to present their ID card to enter a police building.

Officers shall give their name, badge number, and other pertinent information to any person requesting such facts unless doing so would compromise a police assignment.

Whenever away from police property, uniformed police officers shall not acknowledge or show recognition of another police officer in civilian clothes unless that officer first addresses the uniformed officer.

Whenever employees are on police property, they shall wear their official HPD identification prominently displayed at or above the waist on the front of their person so that the employee's photograph and name are easily visible. Only classified employees wearing a department uniform are exempt from this requirement (see General Order 300-15, **Appearance and Grooming Standards**).

## 2 OFFICIAL BADGES

Official badges are the full size badge or hat shield issued by HPD to cadets graduating from the Police Academy, to rehires, or to classified employees during official promotional ceremonies.

Classified employees are not permitted to purchase a duplicate or replica of the official full size HPD badge or HPD hat shield from an outside business. Classified employees shall only wear the department issued badge or hat shield and are not authorized to wear a full size duplicate or replica.

### Oval Badge and Hat Shield

Classified employees may self-purchase a department approved oval badge and hat shield by completing a *Houston Police New Uniform & Hat Shields* order form, available on the department's Intranet Portal, and forwarding it to the Organizational Development Command (ODC) for approval. Upon receipt of the oval badge and hat shield, classified employees shall only be permitted to wear the oval badge and hat shield and will no longer wear their previously issued badge and hat shield, if applicable.

### Detective Badge and Hat Shield

Classified employees at the rank of police officer or senior police officers who work in an investigative assignment and have met the requirements to have the "detective" title may self-purchase the oval detective badge and hat shield. The oval detective badge and hat shield shall be worn only while assigned to an investigative assignment and can be worn on the uniform. The detective badge and hat shield shall not be worn once the employee transfers out of the investigative assignment or obtains a supervisory rank.

The following requirements must be met in order to acquire the detective badge and hat shield:

- a. A minimum of four years with the department.
- b. One year of cumulative HPD investigative experience.
- c. Completed the Basic Investigator training course.
- d. Completed one additional investigative training course.

Once the above requirements have been met, officers shall complete a *Houston Police New Uniform & Hat Shields* order form and deliver it to the Organizational Development Command.

## 3 SPECIALTY BADGES

Specialty badges are badges that are *not* the HPD official full size badge or hat shield. Only the Chief of Police may authorize the purchase and/or utilization of a specialty badge.

### Miniature Badges

Officers desiring to purchase a miniature badge for use in an official law enforcement capacity shall submit a written request through their chain of command (assistant chief level) to the assistant chief of the Organizational Development Command. Once reviewed and approved, ODC shall forward the letter to the TAP Unit for processing.

If approved to purchase a miniature badge for use in an official law enforcement capacity, officers are prohibited from transferring miniature badge to another person. Officers are also urged to consider that if a miniature badge is displayed or presented in an inappropriate manner, persons displaying or presenting the badge may be investigated for misrepresenting themselves as peace officers in violation of Texas Penal Code §37.12.

### Special Event Badges

Special event badges are badges that recognize HPD or law enforcement involvement in a local or national event (e.g., Super Bowl, commemorative 9/11 badge). Special event badges that are offered to classified employees by an outside vendor may be purchased at the employee's own expense and shall not impose any financial obligation on HPD or the City of Houston.

Officers may wear special event badges only as permitted by the Chief of Police. Officers may also permanently mount the badge on a plaque or other form of display to commemorate the event and the officers' contributions.

## 4 RETIREMENT STATUS

A police officer or a TCOLE licensed civilian who retires from the Houston Police Department may be granted honorably retired status if the employee qualifies as noted below and is eligible to receive Houston police or municipal pension payments, as applicable, assuming no other disqualifiers exist.

To determine the retirement status of a retiring HPD officer and certain TCOLE licensed civilians, the department shall utilize the separation criteria set forth on the *Separation of Licensee (F-5)* form from the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE). Employees may review the separation criteria on the F-5 at the TCOLE website. Retirement status shall be based on the following three TCOLE separation categories:

- a. ***Honorably Discharged***. If a retired officer or a TCOLE licensed civilian meets one of the conditions for honorably discharged as listed on the F-5, the employee may receive, upon request, a retirement identification card issued by HPD and the employee shall be afforded all rights and privileges of an honorably retired employee.

If the employee retires during a pending internal investigation in which the employee is a target or potential target and the employee cooperates in the investigation and the investigation results in a Category D cite or less against the employee, the retired employee may be granted honorably discharged status and receive the rights and privileges of an honorably retired employee.

- b. **General Discharge.** If a retired officer or a TCOLE licensed civilian meets one of the conditions for general discharge as listed on the F-5, the employee shall not be given any type of HPD identification.
- c. **Dishonorably Discharged.** If a retired officer or a TCOLE licensed civilian meets one of the conditions for dishonorably discharged as listed on the F-5, the employee shall not be given any type of HPD identification.

## 5 RETENTION OF BADGE AND HAT SHIELD

Under certain conditions, officers who honorably retire or promote may retain their badge and hat shield. Officers shall submit a written request through their chain of command (assistant chief level) to the assistant chief of the Organizational Development Command. The request must specify the badge and hat shield shall be mounted permanently on a plaque or other form of display.

A badge and hat shield may be retained or obtained if requested by:

- a. An officer retiring honorably from the Houston Police Department.
- b. An officer receiving a promotion.
- c. A designated beneficiary (or estate if no beneficiary exists) of a deceased officer who did or would have resigned or retired honorably from the department.

When a designated beneficiary or estate of a deceased officer requests an officer's badge and hat shield, the request shall be routed to the Organizational Development Command. That command shall contact the beneficiary in writing with instructions regarding how to obtain the badge and hat shield. The department letter shall state that the badge and hat shield are to be mounted permanently on a plaque or other form of display.

An officer, designated beneficiary, or estate may retain or obtain only one badge and hat shield for each rank obtained.

## 6 RETIREMENT ID CARD

When retired officers meet the requirements of honorably retired, their HPD retirement ID cards shall indicate such and they shall be afforded all rights and privileges of an honorably retired police officer. Retired officers may also be eligible for certification of firearm proficiency. See General Orders 400-05, **Firearms Qualification and Control**, and 400-06, **Carrying Concealed Firearms**.

If the investigative process has not been completed at the time of an officer's final separation, the retiring officer shall not receive any type of retirement identification and ESD shall temporarily retain the retiring officer's badge and hat shield. Upon determination that the officer meets the criteria for honorably retired status, the employee shall be allowed to pick up the requested items from ESD. Officers are required to sign a receipt for all items received.

Any retired officer failing to meet honorably retired status criteria shall not be given any type of HPD ID card. The Chief of Police shall have the final say as to an employee's retirement status and whether or not the retired officer receives any badge, hat shield, or HPD ID card.

A civilian employee who honorably retires from the department is eligible to receive an HPD retirement ID card when the employee becomes eligible to receive Houston municipal pension payments, assuming no other disqualifiers exist. The civilian employee must have completed at least ten years of service with the City of Houston including at least five years of service with the Police Department immediately preceding retirement or deferred retirement unless the employee qualifies for a disability pension or the employee receives approval by the Chief of Police.

## 7 SUSPENSION

During suspensions the below procedures shall be followed regarding an employee's badge, hat shield, ID card, and keys (see General Order 400-22, **Keys, Passwords, and Personal Identification Numbers**). These procedures apply to all employees except those approved for positive discipline.

When employees receive disciplinary suspensions of 15 days or less and the discipline is handled at the division level, employees shall be allowed to retain their badge, hat shield, ID card, and keys. The suspension paperwork shall instruct employees regarding limitation of activities and use of credentials during the term of the suspension.

Suspensions of 16 days or greater shall be administered by the Internal Affairs Division (IAD). In these instances, the employee's badge, hat shield, ID card, and keys shall be confiscated and stored in IAD.

## 8 RELIEVED OF DUTY

When employees are relieved of duty, their badge, hat shield, all official ID and security credentials, and keys (as defined in General Order 400-22, **Keys, Passwords, and Personal Identification Numbers**) shall be confiscated and stored in IAD (see General Order 200-03, **Investigation of Employee Misconduct**).

## 9 REPLACEMENT

Whenever a badge, hat shield, or ID card is lost, stolen, or damaged, the employee's supervisor shall give the employee a 48-hour notice and an investigation shall be conducted in accordance with the department's disciplinary range system in which it may be handled as an expedited investigation.

While the incident shall not be handled as a supervisory intervention investigation, any corrective action may include a supervisory intervention, if appropriate. The department shall seek restitution from the employee for the total cost of the property if the loss or damage is a result of negligence. See General Order 400-18, **Responsibility for City and Other Government Property**, for additional requirements on making restitution.

When employees' badges, hat shields, or ID cards are lost, stolen, or damaged, employees shall do all of the following:

- a. Report the incident immediately to their supervisor.
- b. Generate a *Significant Event Report* and send it to the Command Center. See General Order 200-10, **Emergency Management**.
- c. Have an incident report generated.
- d. Send an administrative letter, including the issue record form (IRF) number, to their division commander via the chain of command.
- e. For a replacement HPD badge and/or HPD hat shield, bring a copy of the *Significant Event Report*, incident report, and administrative letter with IRF number to the TAP Unit. The TAP Unit will ensure a replacement HPD badge and/or HPD hat shield is ordered for the employee. The TAP Unit will also issue the employee a mandatory HPD badge and HPD hat shield matching loaner set until the employee's replacement badge and/or hat shield order is received.

The TAP Unit will contact the employee when the replacement HPD badge and hat shield are received and will inquire if the investigation is concluded and if restitution is required. If restitution is required, the employee shall provide the TAP Unit with a receipt from the Office of Budget & Finance before the replacement badge and/or hat shield is issued to the employee. The employee shall return the matching loaner HPD badge and HPD hat shield set upon picking up the replacement HPD badge and/or HPD hat shield.

- f. For a replacement ID card, bring a copy of the incident report, a copy of the administrative letter signed by a supervisor, and a receipt for restitution from the Office of Budget & Finance to the Employee Services Division.

The employee's immediate supervisor shall investigate the incident and submit to the division commander a written report that includes all of the following:

- g. A copy of the incident report.
- h. A copy of the *Significant Event Report*.
- i. The employee's administrative letter.
- j. A description of the item including its replacement or repair value as determined by ESD for identification card or the TAP Unit for HPD badge and/or HPD hat shield shall be added to the expedited form, as applicable.

The supervisor shall ensure that the employee immediately contacts ESD to replace a lost, stolen or damaged identification card and/or the TAP Unit to replace a lost, stolen, or damaged HPD badge and/or HPD hat shield, as well as to receive a mandatory loaner badge and/or hat shield.

At the conclusion of the investigation, if it is determined that an employee shall make restitution, the employee shall be directed to contact the Office of Budget and Finance. The supervisor's

written report shall be presented to the Office of Budget and Finance. Single-payment reimbursements shall be accepted with only exact cash or check.

ESD and the TAP Unit may establish additional procedures for replacement of lost, stolen, or damaged ID cards, badges, or hat shields. Such procedures shall not conflict with this General Order. These replacement procedures shall be made available to employees upon request. Employees shall obey these additional procedures.

## **10 PERSONAL BUSINESS CARDS**

Employees are not permitted to have personal business cards that show a connection to the Police Department if such cards bear any information not directly pertaining to their work in the department.



**Art Acevedo**  
**Chief of Police**