

CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT



PAX 501

Matt L. Rodriguez, *Superintendent of Police*



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OPTIONAL WEARING OF THE UNIFORM HAT — PILOT PROGRAM

During the early implementation phases of CAPS, the Department conducted various surveys and focus groups to identify the concerns of Department members. In CAPS training classes as well, members have been asked for their input on Department policies and operations, and their suggestions for improvement.

In all of these critiques, a strong and consistent message has emerged: Department members want more flexibility when it comes to the wearing of uniform hats. They consistently identified this issue as their No. 1 concern and were almost unanimous in wanting current Department policy to be more flexible.

This was further reflected in the results of surveys the Fraternal Order of Police conducted among its members last summer. Those surveys found that 99 percent of FOP members want some change in our policy on uniform hats.

Your feelings on this issue have been loud and clear, strong and consistent. The Department has listened, and we are now prepared to re-evaluate, on a pilot basis, a more flexible policy on the wearing of uniform hats.

Beginning 1 July, and continuing through 31 August, uniformed members assigned to routine patrol duties will have the option to wear or not wear their uniform hats in most situations. All members will ensure that the uniform hat is kept readily accessible, since it must be worn in certain instances, such as when directing traffic or during roll call inspection. In most other circumstances, however, uniformed members will be able to decide for themselves whether or not to wear their hats. A Department directive detailing this pilot program will be published prior to its implementation.

During the two months that this pilot program will be operating, the Department will be carefully monitoring and evaluating its impact. We are specifically interested in learning about your reactions, as well as the reactions of the community. We will also examine how many shields are lost or damaged, as well as the resulting disciplinary action, during this evaluation period. Just as your input was critical in identifying this concern, your input will also be essential in helping the Department evaluate the pilot program and its impact on our operations.

The hat will always be part of our uniform. It is a powerful, highly recognizable symbol of our unique position in the community, and of the high standards and awesome responsibilities that accompany our position. There will always be circumstances where wearing of the hat will be required. During next summer's Democratic National Convention, for example, when the City will be host to many visitors from across the country, uniform hats will be an important identifier for people who may need your assistance.

It is clear, however, that the time has come for the Department to reconsider our basic policy concerning the wearing of uniform hats. The pilot program this summer will help in developing the most reasonable and effective policy for our own members as well as our customers in the community. I look forward to your continued ideas and input on this matter.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matt L. Rodriguez". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "R" at the end.

Matt L. Rodriguez
Superintendent of Police