

## 16.14 UNIFORMS

### Uniforms and Uniform Allowance

- 16.14.1 Beneficiaries of Uniform Allowance are classified under three categories depending on the nature of duties performed by the eligible officers. The categorisation of the grades entitled to payment of the allowance normally rests on the Responsible Officer, who determines which grade should fall in a particular category, after consultation with relevant parties. The different categories are:
- (i) **Category I** - Whose nature of duties warrants a means of identification/authority. The eligible officers should wear uniforms on duty;
  - (ii) **Category II** - Whose nature of duties requires them to wear uniforms, as and when required; and
  - (iii) **Category III** - Whose nature of duties causes excessive wear and tear of clothing. Officers under this category are eligible for a rapid wear and tear allowance.
- 16.14.2 The quantum of the Uniform Allowance is adjusted every year, based on the changes in prices of relevant items of uniforms, as determined by Statistics Mauritius. The Standing Committee on Uniforms set up at the level of the Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reforms (MPSAR) determines the eligibility for the grant of Uniforms/Uniform Allowance to new grades and decides on the provision of boots and new items of protective clothing and equipment, among others.
- 16.14.3 In addition to the Uniform Allowance, eligible officers on the establishment of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly are paid an allowance in view of the working environment, specificity and topography of the island.
- 16.14.4 Uniform Allowance is also payable to eligible officers appointed on a probationary or temporary/casual basis after having served for an initial period of six months.
- 16.14.5 Representations made by the Unions were mostly geared towards an increase of the quantum payable due to the rise in the cost of living and extending eligibility of the Allowance to certain grades on account of the duties performed. During meetings, parties were advised to submit their requests for the grant of Uniform Allowance to new grades to the Standing Committee on Uniforms. They were also informed that the request on the existing mechanism to review the quantum of Uniform Allowance on a yearly basis was effective and the Bureau would maintain same. We are recommending accordingly.

**Recommendation 1**

**16.14.6** We recommend that the revised quantum of Uniform Allowance (excluding cardigan) for each category of beneficiaries payable as from 01 January 2026 should be as per the table below:

Uniform Allowances – effective as from 01 January 2026		
Category	Allowance excluding Cardigan	Additional Allowances (Rodrigues)
I	Rs 5770	Rs 1860
II	Rs 5405	Rs 1750
III	Rs 5230	Rs 1710

**16.14.7** In arriving at the revised quantum, the Bureau took into consideration the increase in the cost of items of uniforms for the period January to December 2026, as determined by the Statistics Mauritius.

**16.14.8** We further recommend that:

- (i) the quantum of Uniform Allowance for subsequent years should continue to be adjusted on the basis of the changes in the prices of all relevant items of uniforms as determined by Statistics Mauritius for the preceding year and on whether cardigans are due in the year or not;
- (ii) the Standing Committee on Uniforms set up at the level of the Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reforms and comprising representatives of the Ministry of Finance and the Pay Research Bureau should continue to determine the eligibility for the grant of uniforms to new grades, decide on the provision of boots and new items of protective clothing and equipment, and devise such regulations or principles that may be necessary to deal with the issue of uniforms; and
- (iii) where it is considered that officers in a new grade or in a grade other than those already eligible should wear uniforms to exercise authority or on the grounds of tradition and/or international etiquette, the Responsible Officer should seek the approval of the Standing Committee on Uniforms. Thereafter, the Responsible Officer should arrange for the supply of all items of uniforms to such eligible officers in a timely and cost-effective manner.

## Issuance of Items of Uniforms

- 16.14.9 Currently, eligible officers in certain grades are issued items of uniform yearly in line with international norms and etiquettes. However, it has been observed that requests were submitted to the Standing Committee on Uniforms for the payment of cash in lieu of uniforms to those grades as incumbents could not be provided with uniforms due to delays in procurement exercises or other administrative issues.
- 16.14.10 The Bureau considers that cash payment should not be an option for eligible officers who have to be issued items of uniform.

## Recommendation 2

### 16.14.11 We recommend that:

- (i) **Responsible Officers should ensure that they have a Procurement Plan to guide their purchasing activities and mitigate risks that may disrupt the timely issue of uniforms to eligible officers; and**
- (ii) **unless there are compelling reasons, the Standing Committee should refrain from considering cases of payment of Uniform Allowance where eligible officers are to be issued items of uniforms.**

## Protective Clothing and Equipment

- 16.14.12 Protective clothing/equipment is provided to eligible officers who are prone to occupational and health hazards at their site of work. The eligibility for same is determined by the Standing Committee on Uniforms based on the recommendations of the assessment exercise carried out by the officers of the Safety and Health Division of the MPSAR.
- 16.14.13 The International Labour Organisation (ILO) Conventions provide, among others, that employers have to:
- ensure that the workplaces, machinery, equipment and processes under their control are safe and without risk to health;
  - ensure that chemical, physical and biological substances and agents are risk-free to health when appropriate measures of protection are taken; and
  - provide, where necessary, adequate protective clothing and equipment.
- 16.14.14 In accordance with Section 82 of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA), where any process carried out at a place of work is likely to cause bodily injury which cannot be prevented by any means, an employer is required to provide suitable and appropriate personal protective equipment and clothing so as to protect the employee from risk of injury. Compliance with the law includes:

- (i) taking into account the ergonomic requirements and the state of health of the eligible officers who are required to wear the personal protective equipment;
- (ii) ensuring that the personal protective equipment is capable to fit the wearer correctly;
- (iii) ensuring that the risk to which the eligible officers are exposed to is effectively prevented or adequately controlled; and
- (iv) maintaining or replacing, when required, any personal protective equipment provided to any person at work.

16.14.15 Requests of the staff side mainly pertained to the grant of personal protective equipment to certain grades in view of the nature of duties performed and their prompt issue to eligible officers. They were advised to redirect such requests to their Management, for subsequent referral to the MPSAR. As regards, prompt issue of protective equipment, the onus of providing same rests on Management, as provided in the OSHA. Some Union members further deplored that in many cases the quality of the personal protective equipment furnished is to be deplored, thereby defeating the very purpose for which they are granted.

16.14.16 In the 2021 PRB Report, we laid emphasis on some of the measures to be taken into consideration based on the OSH Act when providing personal protective items to the eligible officers. We also recommended that cases not resolved at the level of the MPSAR should be submitted to the Standing Committee on Uniforms and eligible officers should be promptly provided with good quality protective items.

16.14.17 Since these recommendations are still valid, we are maintaining them in this Report.

### **Recommendation 3**

**16.14.18 We recommend that the measures listed at paragraph 16.14.14 above should be taken into account by Management while providing personal protective items to eligible employees, including those of the Workmen's Group.**

**16.14.19 We further recommend that:**

- (i) the MPSAR, in consultation with relevant Ministries/Departments/ Organisations should, on the advice tendered by officers of the Safety and Health Division, decide on the provision of boots and new/ additional items of protective clothing/equipment to eligible officers/new grades;**

- (ii) cases which cannot be resolved at the level of the MPSAR should be dealt with by the Standing Committee on Uniforms;
- (iii) officers whose nature of work requires the wearing of items of protective clothing and equipment should promptly be provided with such items that are of good quality and suitable to protect themselves when being exposed to health and safety hazards;
- (iv) Responsible Officers should continue to make necessary arrangements for the timely issue of appropriate items of protective clothing/equipment to eligible officers who should wear/use them; and
- (v) every item of personal protective clothing/equipment should satisfy the basic safety and health requirements applicable to its respective class or type of personal protective equipment and comply with such standards as may be acceptable to the Mauritius Standards Bureau.

#### **Provisions governing Temporary/Casual Staff**

- 16.14.20 Presently, eligible officers appointed on probationary or temporary/casual basis are paid Uniform Allowance after having served for an initial period of six months. Along the same lines, a request was submitted to the Standing Committee on Uniforms for the provision of items of uniforms to eligible officers in certain grades belonging to the Disciplined/Semi-Disciplined Forces/Organisations who are appointed on a temporary basis.
- 16.14.21 The Bureau considers that items of uniforms should be provided to eligible officers who are mandatorily required to wear uniforms, for identification/authority, though on a temporary basis and have not served for six months in that capacity.

#### **Recommendation 4**

##### **16.14.22 We recommend that:**

- (i) eligible officers of the Disciplined/Semi-Disciplined Forces/Organisations, appointed on a probationary or a temporary/casual basis who are mandatorily required to wear uniform by virtue of their duties for identification/authority, should be entitled to the grant of items of Uniform, even though they have not served for an initial period of six months;
- (ii) eligible officers, appointed on a probationary or a temporary/casual basis, should continue to be entitled to the payment of Uniform Allowance after having served for an initial period of six months; and

- (iii) where the nature of work of employees appointed on casual/temporary basis warrants the wearing of protective clothing/item to protect them from bodily injury, Supervising Officers should ensure that the protective clothing/item is as specified at paragraph 16.14.19(v) above and is issued promptly to employees concerned as from the date of assumption of duty.

#### **Internal Audit System on Wearing of Uniforms and Protective Clothing and Equipment**

- 16.14.23 As per the MPSAR's Circular Letter No. 40 of 2022, Supervising Officers are requested to draw the attention of eligible officers to the fact that they should mandatorily wear uniforms, in accordance with the approved patterns, colour and materials and protective equipment/clothing while on duty and that failure to comply with same will lead to disciplinary action and stoppage of Uniform Allowance.
- 16.14.24 Section 14 (1) (c) of the OSH Act 2005, as subsequently amended, stipulates that *"every employee shall, while at work, wear or use any protective equipment or clothing provided by the employer in pursuance of this Act at all times when there is a risk of bodily injury against which the equipment or clothing affords protection."* It is, thus, imperative for all employees who, by virtue of the nature of duties of their respective grade, have been provided with appropriate protective clothing and equipment to wear same on their site of work.
- 16.14.25 We are, therefore, recommending that the Responsible Officer of every organisation should ensure that eligible officers who are required to wear uniforms do so on duty and ascertain that officers who are provided with protective clothing/equipment do make effective use of same in the performance of their duties.
- 16.14.26 We are also maintaining the procedure to be adopted by Management in case of continuous non-compliance as follows:
- (i) the eligible officer concerned should be verbally cautioned for failing in his undertaking to wear uniforms and/or protective clothing/protective item;
  - (ii) in case of further non-compliance, the attention of the eligible officer concerned should be drawn in writing to this effect. The officer should equally be requested to abide, within a prescribed delay, by the undertaking which he has normally signed prior to the payment of the Uniform Allowance or issue of protective clothing/item, failing which he may be liable to disciplinary action; and

- (iii) in the event the officer still fails to abide by the written instructions within the given delay, payment of the Uniform Allowance should be stopped/withdrawn and the eligible officer concerned should, in such circumstance, be required to furnish written explanations following which appropriate action may be taken, as deemed necessary, by Management. This is also applicable to eligible officers who are not wearing protective clothing/protective item.

