

# DMAT CA-6 Uniform and Load Bearing Equipment

The U.S. Public Health Service, the California EMS Authority, DMAT CA-6 and federal regulations define and proscribe the wearing of the DMAT uniform. You must wear this uniform at all official DMAT CA-6 functions.

This document describes the uniform for DMAT CA-6 members. We assembled it to guide you through purchasing and wearing your uniform. If you have questions, contact David Lipin at (650) 551-8935.

## Uniform

U.S. Public Health Service regulations require a clean, neatly pressed, khaki Battle Dress Uniform (BDU) shirt and pants, belt, hat, and black, leather, polishable boots. We highly recommend that you purchase at least three (3) sets of uniforms. When in the field, this lets you wear one uniform, have one in reserve (in case you contaminate the one you are wearing), and have one in the wash. We recommend five sets of uniforms for extended operations where laundry services are unlikely.

The BDU shirt is made of a khaki, ripstop cotton/nylon, “summer weight” (also known as “lightweight”) material. You wear the DMAT CA-6 team tee-shirt tucked into the BDU pants, and wear the untucked BDU shirt over the tee-shirt. The BDU shirt has specific patch and identification requirements:

- Name tapes – A khaki cloth name tape with your last name is sewn directly above and centered on the right breast pocket, and similar name tape stating “U.S. PHS” is sewn on the left breast pocket. The khaki tapes are 1” high with black, all-capital letters.



Sew them such that they extend the full width of the pocket, with the bottom edge of the tape just touching the top of the pocket seam, and the left and right ends of the tape folded under and sewn.



- NDMS patch – An NDMS patch (round, red, white and blue) is sewn on the left breast pocket. Center the patch on the largest portion of the pocket (not the flap). You get this patch from the Administrative Assistant when you show him/her your otherwise-complete uniform.
- Flag patch – A “reverse” 2x3 inch **colored** American flag is sewn on the right sleeve approximately ½ inch below the seam at the top of the shoulder. **Order the “reverse” flag, not the “subdued” flag.**

- Team patch – A team patch is sewn on the left sleeve approximately ½ inch below the seam at the top of the shoulder. You purchase this patch from the Administrative Assistant.



**Note: you cannot wear any patches, pins or identification on your uniform other than those specified above.**

The BDU pants are made of the same material as the BDU shirt. You may sew a name tape (last name, as specified above) above the right rear pocket. This name tape is optional but recommended. You wear the pants “bloused” (tucked) into the top of the boots and held in place by blousing bands or tie cords. Your pant legs cannot be down around the boot. See below for blousing instructions.

The khaki web belt has an “open face” brass buckle and is the standard U.S. Marine Corps issue uniform belt. Note: this is a uniform belt; don’t confuse it with the web belt part of the LBE described below.



Boots must be black leather with good ankle support and a polishable surface (with all scuffs and scrapes touched up). We recommend military, police or fire department boots with steel toe and shank. We also recommend that you wear two pairs of socks: one light weight (like Thinsulate) and one medium weight (like wool). This reduces the incidence of hot spots and blisters.

The hat is a khaki baseball cap. You wear it whenever you are outside. All caps look very similar, so we suggest that you sew a name tape (or write your name) inside your cap. When in the field, you can wear a full-brimmed, khaki “boonie” hat instead of the baseball cap. This type of hat provides better sun protection, but is not a replacement for the required baseball-style cap (regulation uniform hat).



### **Outer wear**

A khaki, M-65 military field jacket is the **only** jacket you can wear with your uniform. It must have the same patches and identification as the uniform shirt.

In cold weather deployments, you can wear a black ski cap or balaclava instead of a hat. You can also wear a warm shirt and pants (wool or fleece) over your uniform, providing they are either khaki or black. (They can be any color if worn underneath the uniform.)

The only other outer clothing you can wear with your uniform is a yellow rain suit or poncho. We recommend a rain suit, because working with patients is often difficult when wearing a poncho.

This concludes the portion of the uniform that you are required to wear to all DMAT functions. The LBE (described below) is required only when in the field.

### **Load Bearing Equipment or daypack**

Load Bearing Equipment (LBE) consists of a military web belt, suspenders, and various pouches to which you attach a flashlight, canteens and other individual equipment items. An LBE or a daypack is a **required** part of the uniform when **in the field and on military aircraft**. The LBE belt, suspenders and pouches must be black. You can



configure an LBE with a variety of pouches and equipment. *You may wear an all-black daypack (with flashlight, canteens, and other required equipment) instead of an LBE; the daypack must not have any visible labels, or colors other than black.* If you wear an LBE, **DMAT CA-6 requires the following minimum items** (each sold separately):

- **Web belt** – There are at least three types of web belts available. All are either current or surplus military issue. The primary difference between the belts (other than color) is the buckle. We recommend the current issue, defined by a plastic buckle, the male portion of which has three prongs. This three-prong buckle fits a belt extender device that quickly increases the diameter of the belt to let you wear the LBE over a field jacket or rain gear (not poncho). Without this extender (purchased separately), you have to re-adjust the web belt each time you wear it over the field jacket or rain gear.



- **Suspenders** – There are currently three types of military issue suspenders available. You can wear any with the DMAT CA-6 uniform:

1. Vietnam-era “H-Harness” consisting of two straps attached at the front of the web belt, which pass over the shoulders and connect to the web belt by two straps at the back. The straps are connected together behind the shoulders.
2. Current military issue “Y-Harness” consisting of two straps attached at the front of the web belt, which pass over the shoulders, and are connected together behind the shoulders. From this connection, a single strap goes down the back and connects to the web belt.
3. Current military issue Special Operations suspenders consisting of a heavy duty “H-Harness” with two wide, padded straps attached at the front of the web belt, which pass over the shoulders and connect to the web belt by two straps at the back. The straps are connected together behind the shoulders.



- Flashlight – Military “angle head” flashlight carried on the **right** suspender strap slightly above breast level. This type of flashlight is required whether you wear an LBE or a daypack. It is designed to shine light forward (like a headlight), and works with military-issue winter outerwear (unlike a head lamp).

- First aid/compass pouch – Carried on the **left** suspender strap slightly above breast level.

- Canteens – Two 1-quart canteen covers attached to the web belt, carried on the right and left hips, towards the rear. Leave enough room between them for a fanny pack in back. Place a black or olive drab 1-quart canteens inside each canteen cover. Place one military canteen cup (we recommend two) inside one of the canteen covers.



- Ammunition pouches – Two M-16 style ammunition pouches attached to the web belt, carried in the front on either side of the web belt buckle. Ammo pouches are used as additional pockets. See *DMAT CA-6 Minimum Personal Equipment List* for items to place in these pouches.

- Knife or utility tool – DMAT CA-6 personnel may not carry or use weapons. You may carry a knife as part of the LBE equipment, providing it is a fully sheathed utility (pocket or buck) knife. You may also carry an EMT/RN type “holster” containing a knife.

- Fanny pack – An all-black fanny pack worn between the two canteens, not attached to the LBE. We do not recommend military “butt packs” that attach to the web belt (it is difficult to sit and access while wearing it).

### **Backpack**

Backpacks come in a variety of sizes, shapes, designs, and colors. Because many members already own a backpack, we set this policy as liberally as possible, consistent with expected mission requirements. **In an effort to minimize cost, we do not require a backpack – but we strongly recommend one.** If you don’t use a backpack, you place your equipment directly into your duffel bag (see below). We do not recommend this, because it is not easy to carry a duffel bag for any distance, and duffel bags do not provide enough cushioning to protect your equipment from rough baggage handling. If you use a backpack, it must be an internal frame backpack, a medium ALICE pack with or without an external frame, or a large ALICE pack with an external frame. It can be any color, but must have a minimum capacity of 3500 cubic inches.

- ALICE packs – Experience has shown that the military ALICE pack is one of the very few external frame packs capable of withstanding the continued abuse of military loadmasters and civilian baggage handlers. A medium ALICE pack will hold all the necessary gear for a self-sustainable DMAT mission of 72 hours. The

medium ALICE pack can be used with or without the external frame. The large ALICE requires the external frame. You can purchase ALICE packs at most military outlet stores and military catalogs.

- Internal frame backpacks – There is a wide variety of internal frame backpacks on the civilian market capable of handling abuse and with enough capacity for a self-sustainable DMAT mission of 72 hours.



The key here is to minimize the size of the backpack to dimensions small enough to hold what you need. Remember, you may have to carry your own pack whatever distance necessary to accomplish the mission. Don't count on transportation to be available. The simple rule is: **you bring it – you carry it – you live with it - you live out of it!** (Or as they say in the military, “travel light, freeze at night.”)

Most backpackers are in a constant battle to reduce the size of their packs. Consider taking only what you need, based on the length time you think you will need it. Unfortunately, this is something best learned through experience. However here are some tips:

- Whenever possible, select items that perform “double duty”, such as using a collapsing water bladder or a field jacket liner rolled up as a pillow. This philosophy saves weight and space in your pack.
- Don't take more sleeping bag than you need. A “20 degree bag” will work well in most DMAT situations and if you need more, layer on additional clothing before going to bed. Down bags are the smallest when packed, and are also very light and warm – **until they get wet!** Once wet, they require a dryer before they are useable again. Stick to synthetic fill for your bag. It's cheaper by far, and DMAT missions don't need anything more. “Hollofill” or it's equivalent is a good choice. Pick a “backpacking bag” instead of a “car bag”. It should weigh no more than 4 to 6 pounds.
- Don't carry liquid or gas fuels for stoves. They won't be allowed on military or civilian aircraft, and they can ruin your gear if they leak. Instead, consider the possibility of obtaining fuel at your destination (not always possible) or investing in solid fuel tabs such as trioxane.

### **Duffel bag**

Straps get torn off backpacks during baggage handling, and things get stolen when backpacks are left unattended. To protect your equipment, you put your backpack (and anything else you carry) in a lockable duffel bag for transport and security. You will be allowed one (and only one) bag for all personal gear, including backpack.

**Your duffel bag must be black or olive drab.** If you do not carry a backpack, your duffel bag only needs to be big enough to hold your personal equipment (we recommend 3500 cubic inches). If you carry a backpack, your duffel bag must be large enough to hold your fully-loaded backpack.

When you are carrying your backpack, the duffel bag should fit inside your backpack. When your personal gear is left unattended, it should fit in the duffel bag, the duffel bag locked and “secured” to some fixed object if possible.

There are a number of commercial bags on the market as well as military duffel bags and “Fliers Kit Bags”. Some are cylindrical, some are rectangular, and some even have wheels on one end! The key here is security and ease of transport for you and for the Logistics group.

Look for thick material (like ballistic nylon or heavy canvas), few (if any) outside pockets, and sturdy zippers that you can lock to the end of the bag (so you can’t zip the zippers, even when locked to each other). We also recommend that you invest in an inexpensive "cable type" bicycle cable (with combination lock) to secure your duffel bag to a fixed object, and that you sew a name tape onto your bag – this helps you easily identify your bag in a pile of similar ones.

### **Rolling up your sleeves, military-style**

There is a special way to roll up your uniform shirt sleeves in warm weather. This method lets you pull your sleeves down quickly to provide some exposure protection from blood or other bodily fluids, as well as chemicals and other hazardous materials.

1. Take off your shirt and lay it on a flat surface.
2. Pull up the sleeve inside out, so the cuff of the sleeve is up near the shoulder. Straighten out as many wrinkles as you can.
3. Fold up the end of the sleeve about 1 ½ in inches. Continue making folds in this manner until the sleeve is the desired length.
4. Fold the cuff of the sleeve back down over the folded sleeve.



When you want to pull your sleeves back down (while wearing your shirt), simply grab the cuff and pull.

### **Blousing your pants**

You must wear your uniform pants “bloused” into your boots. This provides some exposure protection from mosquitoes and ticks, as well as chemicals and other hazardous materials. You may want some privacy to do this (read on):

1. Put on your pants and boots as you normally would, with your pants down around your boots.
2. If your pants have ties sewn into the ankle hem, tie them around your ankle, inside your boot just below the top. Otherwise tuck your pant legs into your boots about 2 inches.
3. Pull your pants down around your ankles and the tops of your boots.
4. Affix a “blousing band” or rubberband over your pants, about 2 inches below the top of the boot. Blousing bands are simple elastic strips with velcro or metal hooks on the ends.
5. Pull your pants back up.

