



U.S. Department of Justice

Civil Rights Division

CL:JV:CH:CB:ES:MC  
DJ: 207-42-6

*Special Litigation Section - PHB  
950 Pennsylvania Ave, NW  
Washington DC 20530*

September 23, 2014

Chief Thomas Jackson  
Police Chief  
City of Ferguson  
222 S. Florissant Road  
Ferguson, MO 63135

Re: Ferguson Police Department Investigation: Officer Name Plates

Dear Chief Jackson:

When we met at the outset of our investigation, we noted that, where appropriate, we would inform you of any concerns that we discovered during our investigation that warrant your immediate attention. During our time in Ferguson, we have observed that some Ferguson police officers were not wearing name plates. We also have heard numerous complaints that Ferguson police officers do not wear name plates, indicating that our observations are not aberrational.

We have reviewed Ferguson Police Department's General Order 214.00, *Uniforms, Equipment, and Appearance* (January 3, 2012), which indicates that officers are issued "name plates" with their first initial and last name, and requires that officers wear a "name tag," bearing their first initial and last name on both their uniform shirt and jacket. This policy also requires that supervisors inspect personnel daily, and periodically require personnel to produce all Department-issued property for inspection. Officers found not in conformity with this policy may be subject to disciplinary action.

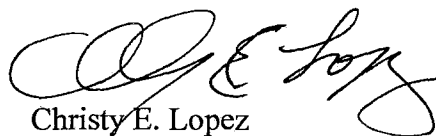
Officers wearing name plates while in uniform is a basic component of transparency and accountability. It is a near-universal requirement of sound policing practices and required under some state laws. Allowing officers to remain anonymous when they interact with the public contributes to mistrust and undermines accountability. The failure to wear name plates conveys a message to community members that, through anonymity, officers may seek to act with impunity. Further, the lack of name plates makes it difficult or impossible for members of the public to identify officers if they engage in misconduct, or for police departments to hold them accountable.

We urge you to explain to officers the importance of General Order 214.00 and to begin enforcing it immediately. Please let us know at your earliest convenience whether you intend to do so.

Our investigation is ongoing and we will provide a complete report of our findings when it is complete. We are writing this interim letter regarding this specific, easily remedied problem, to allow the City of Ferguson and its police department to immediately correct a practice that is at odds with principles of constitutional policing, and that engenders deep distrust among the very people whose trust police most need to effectively fight crime and protect public safety.

Please do not hesitate to call me if you have questions.

Sincerely,



Christy E. Lopez  
Deputy Chief  
Special Litigation Section  
Civil Rights Division  
United States Department of Justice

cc: John Shaw  
Ferguson City Manager

Stephanie Karr  
City Attorney