

the Crossmen

A Guide to Wearing the Cross

INTRODUCTION

Imagine for a second what would happen if we accidentally switched equipment trucks with another corps (say... Spirit) coming out of a big show, and went in opposite directions. We go through our pre-show preparations...the percussion section finds that they can still play pretty well on Spirit's drums and equipment, the horn line figures out how to play on Spirit's horns, and the color guard manages to make do with the replacement flags. Everything seems like it's going to be OK, and then...we put on the uniforms. Who are we now? Imagining the Crossmen going on the field with another corps' uniform is not only preposterous, it's impossible. Even after we performed the show, the crowd thinks, "Spirit just performed Crossmen's show", not "Crossmen are wearing Spirit's uniform". What I'm trying to get at it is: our uniforms complete us as Crossmen; they are what transform us into Bones for the audience to see. You think of the Crossmen, and the image that pops into your mind is some faceless member or section, standing tall in a Crossmen uniform. When you put on your superman suit for the first time, that is the moment when you really become a Crossmen. When that aussie is pulled over your eyes, you lose yourself, your personal identity means nothing, you are merely in Unity with the whole that is the Crossmen.



Since it is our most important piece of equipment, and in fact the most important symbol of our corps, the uniform must be treated with absolute reverence and respect at all times. Yes, it is important to treat it carefully because they are expensive, and because it is difficult to replace in the middle of tour. But more importantly, the uniform must be treated with respect because the way you treat your uniform reflects your personal attitude towards the corps. By disrespecting your uniform, you are disrespecting your fellow members and all who have worn the uniform over the past thirty years. That said, a quick disclaimer: this is quite long, and may seem like a bunch of tedious rules to a new member. However, without these rules, we are just a bunch of bums with a pretty suit. With these rules, we have the aura and presence that the Crossmen should have.

PREPARING YOURSELF TO WEAR THE CROSS

Preparing yourself to put on the uniform is as important as wearing it. The way you look, and the state you are in under the uniform, will only further convey the image of professionalism and perfection we are looking to present.

- **SHOWERING:** Everyone MUST shower prior to putting on the uniform. This is not an option. The uniforms will become sweaty and stinky enough through just wearing them during performance. Do not add rehearsal-day dirt and grime to the mix.
- **SHAVING:** **You may not have even the slightest sign of scruff while wearing the uniform.** This applies to EVERY SINGLE PERFORMANCE including parades and standstills. Gentlemen are permitted to have sideburns and goatees, but they must be TRIMMED TO PERFECTION, SHORT, AND SHAPED. No long beards, stray hairs, or anything else. Sideburns also should not be over-grown, but neatly trimmed.
- **GUYS HAIR:** A buzz cut is easiest, but the overall rule is hair should not cover the back of your neck. **Previously the “no hair should touch uniform collar rule” was in effect. Keep it even**

shorter this year. We should be able to see your neck looking at you from behind, while wearing the uniform. Shorter hair is also easier to care for, and we have EXPERT haircut people on tour to help you (Mario...and his clippers!!!) ☺

- **GIRLS HAIR:** Prepare the Bun-o-steel or nice tight Ponytail. Abby Rahn has prepared an awesome guide for hair care for ladies. Bottom line, we shouldn't be able to tell the difference between a guy and girl when you have the aussie on. Make sure that your bun/pony tails are high enough, so that they fit under the aussie and don't displace it. **NO FLY AWAY HAIRS WHATSOEVER.** Use enough gel or "hair goo" to ensure your hair is slick, and well kept under the uniform. It should look virtually the same after performance as it did before it.
- **GLOVES:** Black gloves. Keep your rehearsal gloves and performance gloves separate. **YOU CANNOT HAVE HOLES IN EITHER SETS OF GLOVES.** You would never consider performing in pants that had a hole in your rear end. Gloves should be no different.
- **BLACK SOCKS:** Knee high black socks are strongly recommended, to avoid any chance of skin being seen.
- **JEWELRY/MAKEUP:** No watches, earrings, neckpieces, bracelets, ETC. may be worn. You may wear a religious pendant, so long as it is under the uniform and no one can see it.
- **DINKLE, DINKLE LITTLE STAR:** Your Dinkles should be **polished before every performance.** You can use soft scrub to clean them, but black shoe polish/kiwi quick shine should be used on these before each show. Your Dinkles should GLOW they are so clean.

WEARING THE UNIFORM

From the Spring Training Guide – STANDARD RULES:

1. At no time should you eat or drink while in uniform. Water is the only exception.
2. Running in uniform is **STRICTLY PROHIBITED.** It is out of character, and shows a lack of respect for the uniform.
3. Do not lean or sit on anything while in uniform.
4. **NEVER SWEAR** in uniform. This is incredibly disrespectful to all those who have worn the uniform, and to those around you.
5. Never polish your horn in uniform. Common sense.
6. Never shave in uniform. Hair clings to the uniform, and is incredibly unsightly.

The most important thing to remember when you wear the Crossmen uniform is that someone who sees you no longer sees you as an individual; they see a member of the Crossmen. Anything you do in uniform will not be remembered as something /you/ did, it will be remembered as something the Crossmen do. In drum corps, image is reality, and so your image while wearing the uniform must be perfection at all times. So: stand tall, never swear, limit public displays of affection to brief hugs, never spit, and hold your equipment properly. Also, **do not badmouth other corps or other people when in uniform, you never know who could be listening.** We will always move in twos (with a partner) when in uniform. If the jacket is on your body, it is fully zipped and the shoulder pads are positioned properly, and your gauntlets are properly fastened over your gloves. You will only be seen in public in either half uniform, wearing your pants fully zipped and shoulder straps up, with black underarmor/spandex underwear and shirt, black gloves, black socks and Dinkles, or in full uniform, with the possible exception of your aussie



THE AUSSIE: The aussie in particular is a special symbol of our corps, and we have some unique traditions involving it. First of all, it is not a hat, shako, helmet, or anything else, it is an aussie. The aussie has one side folded up with a cross pinned on; that is the left, and when the cross is facing left (obviously) the front is facing forward. **FOR THE LOVE OF GOD** do not ever put your aussie on backwards. To this day I still run my hand along the brim just to make sure every time I put it on.

There is only one correct way to hold the aussie: In your left hand, with your fingers curled over the flat side of the aussie below the cross. Your thumb is on the inside holding the string in place, out of sight, and the brim is even with the ground. You do not hang the aussie over your neck, and you do not hold it dangling by the string.

When the aussie goes on your head, you are in full performance mode. The brim is pulled down as low as possible, which we will define this year. The aussies will be worn lower than in previous seasons, and we will go over the correct height, but the brim of the aussie will almost touch the tip of your nose. No one should be able to see your eyes, while you are in the aussie. The string should be tightened to right below your lip, leaving just enough room for your embouchure.



No Rodeo-Buckaroos!! If the aussie becomes tilted back on your head, Gary C. will call you Sally Star, and the rest of us will just laugh at you. No matter what, if your aussie starts sliding back on your head, fix it.

If you wear glasses: We will help you with getting the aussie down lower. If you have contacts and can wear them, it would be best for performance, however; it is still possible to look great in the aussie even with glasses on. You just need to be aware of the angle of the brim.

Finally, and most importantly, wearing the aussie is the final step of transformation into full performance mode. **When the aussie goes on, you do not talk. This is an absolute and unbreakable rule, and there is almost nothing worse you could do in my eyes than goofing off while wearing the aussie.** If you are asked a question by a staff member, you may respond, or if there is an emergency, but other than that, there is no talking, laughing, crying, mouthing, whispering or making funny faces while wearing the aussie. Personally, when I put my aussie on, I see it as completely losing my identity and becoming one with the corps for performance. I may be relaxed until the moment I put it on my head, but then I instantaneously flip the switch and go into badass mode until it comes back off.

“TWOS”

- Whenever you are in uniform, or in halves, or anytime exiting the bus, you **MUST** have a partner – ‘A Two’ - THIS INCLUDES:
 - BATHROOM TRIPS
 - POST SHOW FUNCTIONS, WHILE IN UNIFORM
 - WALKING TO THE EQUIPMENT TRUCK
 - DEPARTING THE CORPS FOR ANY REASON
- When you are representing the Crossmen, you should never be seen alone. This defeats the purpose of “Unity.”
- When you are walking together, you do not need to be in step, however, you should appear focused and mature.
- **No horseplay, no screaming, no messing around whatsoever. We are CrossMEN, not Crosschildren.**
- You may talk to one another, however, when we are traveling in a block, or in twos walking anywhere, your mouth is shut, your head is held high, and you are focused.
- You shouldn’t be **tense**, but you should be **intense** and **intent** on the job you are about to do.
- **At no time do we break ranks while moving as a corps. An 18-wheeler truck could be coming towards you and you stand your ground. No one should ever cut in between the Crossmen.**

“HURRY UP AND WAIT” – PRE-PERFORMANCE BEHAVIOR

- At show sites, parades, warm-up locations, or in many other instances, we will move a lot, and wait. Move some more, and wait.
- *WHILE WAITING* - **This will be different than last season.**
 - Remain at standby, or trail position until instructed otherwise by the Drum Majors/Horn Captain
 - **Do not talk, move around, or even flinch** unless given the instruction to relax
 - When you are told to relax, this is not license to talk to your neighbor. You may stretch, place your horn down in the block, and stand comfortably. Grab some water, and stay loose.
 - We must be mature, collected, and represent the class act nature of the Crossmen Drum and Bugle Corps
 - Do not be tight, but be focused/intense. There is a difference. Use the time to collect your thoughts and think about your upcoming performance.

WHAT ABOUT AFTER THE SHOW?

Coming off the field, **WE ARE STILL PERFORMING**. Even after you are dismissed from the post-show discussion, **YOU SHOULD STILL FOLLOW UNIFORM PROTOCOL**. This means you are with a two, and you should return to the trucks and busses to change out of your uniform as quickly as possible.

Obviously, “no teeth” is in effect while the aussie are on. Do not look, flinch, or move until we have circled up, and the Drum Major has instructed you to remove your aussie.

If you wish to take photos in uniform with family, that is fine however, you should still be with a two and should take the photos as quickly as possible. Otherwise, before you engage in social time with family, or members of other corps, you must return to the truck and busses and change out of uniform. Remember, you are still representing the Crossmen every second you are in uniform.

RETREAT/ENCORE PERFORMANCES

Similar to our behavior protocol while waiting at show sights, and preparing to move, while the corps is on retreat or in Encore arc, there is no talking or moving – you are either at attention or parade rest. For standard shows, there will be no retreat, but we will do encore performances from time to time. At shows with retreat, be aware we do not play games over lines nor do we react to comments made by people or members of other corps. Whether the corps wins or not, the reaction is the same – none. The horn captain or another senior member will call you to attention to be recognized, and then you will return to parade rest. Ranks will not be broken until the corps has assembled and the final instructions have been given. When it is done, the Drum Majors will dismiss the corps. This is done because we feel it is demeaning to the other corps to celebrate our victory or their defeat. It is also a long-standing tradition of the Crossmen that we display a professional bearing **AT ALL TIMES**.

FOLDING AND HOLDING THE UNIFORM

On the way to a warm-up we will often hold our jackets, gauntlets, and aussies. There is a specific way to do this:

1. Hold the jacket by the shoulders, and fold it in half backwards so that the shoulders meet. With the cross facing you, fold the sleeves behind the jacket by bringing the elbows up behind the shoulders.
2. Drape the uniform over your left arm so that the cross is displayed forward.
3. Carefully roll the gauntlets inside the aussie, and hold the aussie correctly on top of the jacket.

Sometimes it's necessary to put the uniform on the ground when warming up. To do this:

1. Place your aussie on your horn, facing forward, and spread the gauntlets on the ground, inside down, with the left gauntlet on the left.
2. Put the jacket on your gauntlets the way it is draped over your arm (with the cross facing up and the collar forward) (yes this is a change) folded in half
3. Put the aussie on top with the cross on the left.

Make sure the uniforms are properly lined up. The staff may be yelling at you to hurry up, but it is still vital that the uniforms look pristine.

STORING THE UNIFORM

Most of the damage that gets done to the uniforms happens because they are not stored properly. Consider this as important as the way you wear it. Marissa Roe will be overseeing the uniforms on the truck this year, so don't get her any lip if she asks you to re-hang or clean up your uniform ☺ She's tough, but fair!

Plumes: The most often least-talked about piece of the uniform, yet one of the most expensive to replace and important that it looks good. Plumes will be distributed during warm-up, and should be returned to the plume storage bins IMMEDIATELY following performance. Do not store these with your aussie, or on the bus. They damage VERY easily and are difficult to replace mid-tour.

The Pants: It's obvious that you do not leave your pants crumpled on the floor, but it is also important to hang them properly. Make sure the creases are lined up properly and that it hangs evenly over the hanger.

The Gauntlets: Should be strapped around the angled part of the hanger. The larger side should be on the inside, and they should hang forward over the pants. The gauntlets may be rolled into your aussie temporarily.

The Jacket: The hanger should curve forward into the shoulders of the jacket, not backwards. Should be zipped all the way up, and make sure the 'bling strip' is not tangled on anything.

The Aussie: Can be hung over the hanger of your uniform (facing up) or stored flat (never upside down). If in an aussie bin, **the cross should be left.** Please ensure all aussies are facing the same way in storage.

In addition, your shoes and show gloves are part of your uniform and should be cared for appropriately. You should be prepared to change your show gloves every two weeks or so.

CONCLUSION

It is not necessary to memorize all of these rules immediately. For the most part, you will pick them up as you go. However, it is important to at least be familiar with them, so that when you get an icy stare from your section leader you can quickly figure out what you're doing wrong. Vets, some of this may be different from what you did last year, because last year we did not have a completely uniform standard, especially for the way the uniform is draped over the arm. Make sure you note anything that's different from how you did it last year, because we will be taking uniformity very seriously this year.

There is something special about wearing the Cross, and being in the Crossmen. You are part of an organization with a proud heritage, and an image that is known worldwide. The more that you embrace being a member of this corps, and appearing as one, the more respect the Crossmen earn as a whole, and the better the image we create of ourselves. Be proud, be cocky, and hold your head high! And remember, no teeth!!!

