

APFA Uniform Frequently Asked Questions Sheet

Since American Airlines introduced new uniforms in September, nearly 3,000 Flight Attendants have reported suspected uniform reactions to APFA. APFA is investigating the reason why these reactions are occurring. This fact sheet has been prepared by APFA to provide information to the Flight Attendants it represents based on what is known now to APFA.

Q. What kinds of problems can chemicals that are found in fabrics cause?

A. The National Institute of Health reports common problems that can be caused by chemicals potentially found in fabrics. For example, some volatile organic chemicals such as formaldehyde can cause eye, skin and respiratory system irritation, headaches, neurological problems and many other health effects. Some heavy metals (a category of chemicals) can alter levels of thyroid hormones, estrogens and testosterone. Many other chemicals that may be present could have varied health effects. One thing that APFA is investigating is the potential effects of cumulative exposures to many chemicals in the garments.

Q. Who is affected by chemicals found in fabrics?

A. Every person reacts uniquely to chemicals, depending on the amount, timing and conditions of exposure, their health status and genetics, and other chemicals in their environment. Some chemicals are “irritants,” with the potential to cause reactions in anyone. Other chemicals are “sensitizers,” that can cause reactions in people who are allergic to them, even at very low levels of exposure.

Responses to chemical exposures vary from one person to the next. For example, some heavy metals can cause endocrine disruption in some people but not others due to differences in the ability to detoxify chemicals. Even with the same exposure, responses to chemicals vary across people and over our lifespan.

Q. What are the results of the testing that has been conducted to date?

A. APFA has performed preliminary chemical testing of Flight Attendant uniform pieces. No single chemical has emerged from this as the clear cause of reactions, but many are capable of causing irritant reactions with sufficient exposure (for example, formaldehyde). APFA is working with the Company on a joint plan for chemical testing, and it will continue to research and investigate chemicals that may be in uniforms, on its own if necessary.

The APFA testing was conducted according to the OEKO-TEX® Standard 100 (www.oeko-tex.com), a textile industry standard. The testing was limited to a small number of garments. There are additional garments, such as dresses, that have been identified in uniform reaction reports from Flight Attendants as suspected causes of reactions and that have not yet been tested by APFA. In addition, there are chemicals that are potentially found in clothing and that are not included in the OEKO-TEX® Standard 100 testing procedure. So, the testing that APFA has performed to date is best described as limited.

APFA's testing revealed the following detectable chemicals in samples of garments that were tested:

Chemical	Garment or garment component	Concentration (mg/kg)
Carbaryl	Shell of a vest	0.12
	Lining of a vest	0.08
Cadmium	Lining of a short sleeve jacket	0.14
	Shell of an apron	0.052
Captafol	Sweater	0.06
Chromium	Shell of a vest	0.15
	Shell of a short sleeve jacket	0.24
	Lining of a short sleeve jacket	0.13
Copper	Serving garment	5.6
Formaldehyde	Long-sleeved female blouse	30.0
	Serving garment	26.0
Monochlorophenols	Composite sample made from the lining of a vest and the lining of a short sleeve jacket	0.12
Nickel	Lining of a short sleeve jacket	0.30
	Shell of an apron	0.18
	Lining of pants	0.21
Nonylphenol	Lining of a vest	6.0
Nonylphenoethoxylates (1-20)	Composite sample made from the shell of a vest and the shell of a short sleeve jacket	10.0
	Serving garment	11.0
Pentachlorophenol	Serving garment	0.02
	Composite sample made from the shell of pants and lining of pants	0.02
Tetrachlorophenols	Female pants	0.02
	Composite sample made from the shell of pants and lining of pants	0.02
Trichlorophenols	Serving garment	0.01

One chemical in one of the sample garments that was tested, cadmium in the short sleeve jacket, had a level above the OEKO-TEX standard. No one chemical was found in all garments. However, as we stated above, testing was only done on a small number of garments, and variations in levels and chemicals in each individual garment can occur. So the results from the limited testing shown above very likely do not necessarily indicate what is in your uniform.

Two or more chemicals at different concentrations also may contribute to a particular health effect, and concentrations of different chemicals may have different effects on individuals. So it is very important to not place too much emphasis on the concentration of any single chemical found in the testing to date. As we stated above, APFA is continuing to investigate the presence of chemicals in the uniforms through a variety of methods.

Q: What are my options if I have experienced a suspected reaction to a uniform?

A: If you have experienced a suspected reaction to a uniform, APFA strongly recommends that you seek medical advice. Depending on your symptoms, we suggest that you seek advice from a well-regarded medical professional who specializes in the health problems you have experienced, for example, a dermatologist, allergist, endocrinologist, or neurologist. It may be helpful to find one who has experience with patients dealing with chemical exposure issues. The list of chemicals above may be useful in a medical evaluation of a suspected reaction—although we stress that the list is the result of the limited testing that has been performed to date by APFA.

In addition, we encourage you to fill out a New Uniform Reaction Report on APFA’s website at www.apfa.org/new-uniform-reaction-reports. The information that APFA has received from Flight Attendants to date has been incredibly useful to our investigation.

You also should consider filing an IOD, depending on your personal circumstances and even if you have not missed work because of the suspected reaction. If you have questions about filing an IOD, you can contact Bellia Peckson at iod@apfa.org.

We also recommend that you document suspected reactions with photographs of both the reaction and the tag of the garment suspected to have caused the reaction, and that you store that garment in a sealed plastic bag for the time being.

Q: Are alternative uniforms available?

A: Any Flight Attendant who is uncomfortable wearing the new uniform can contact the AA Uniform Call Center to return to his or her old uniforms. If you have already disposed of your old uniforms, you can receive authorization from the Call Center to purchase articles of like color and style (white shirt and grey pants or skirts); the Company will reimburse you for reasonable costs at or below the following amounts:

Description	Color	Price
FEMALE PANT - CLASSIC	DKCHR	\$ 34.98
FEMALE PANT - SLIM	DKCHR	\$ 33.39
FEMALE A-LINE SKIRT	DKCHR	\$ 33.96
FEMALE WRAP SKIRT	DKCHR	\$ 37.25
FEMALE S/S BLOUSE	WHITE	\$ 21.95
FEMALE L/S BLOUSE	WHITE	\$ 23.05
MALE CLASSIC FLAT FRONT PANT	DKCHR	\$ 37.33
MALE SLIM FLAT FRONT PANT	DKCHR	\$ 37.33
MALE SS SHIRT CLASSIC	WHITE	\$ 24.10
MALE SS SHIRT SLIM WHITE	WHITE	\$ 24.10
MALE LS SHIRT CLASSIC	WHITE	\$ 26.74
MALE LS SHIRT SLIM	WHITE	\$ 26.74

You must contact the Call Center if you want to return to your old uniforms or buy articles of clothing as an alternative to the new uniform.

Here is the number: 1-800-VIP-CREW (#, 6, then option 5) (Open Daily, 0700 – 1800 CST)