

History of the "Checkered Band" of the Chicago Police Department – INDIANA LAW ENFORCEMENT MEMORIAL

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by [Indiana Law Enforcement Memorial](#)
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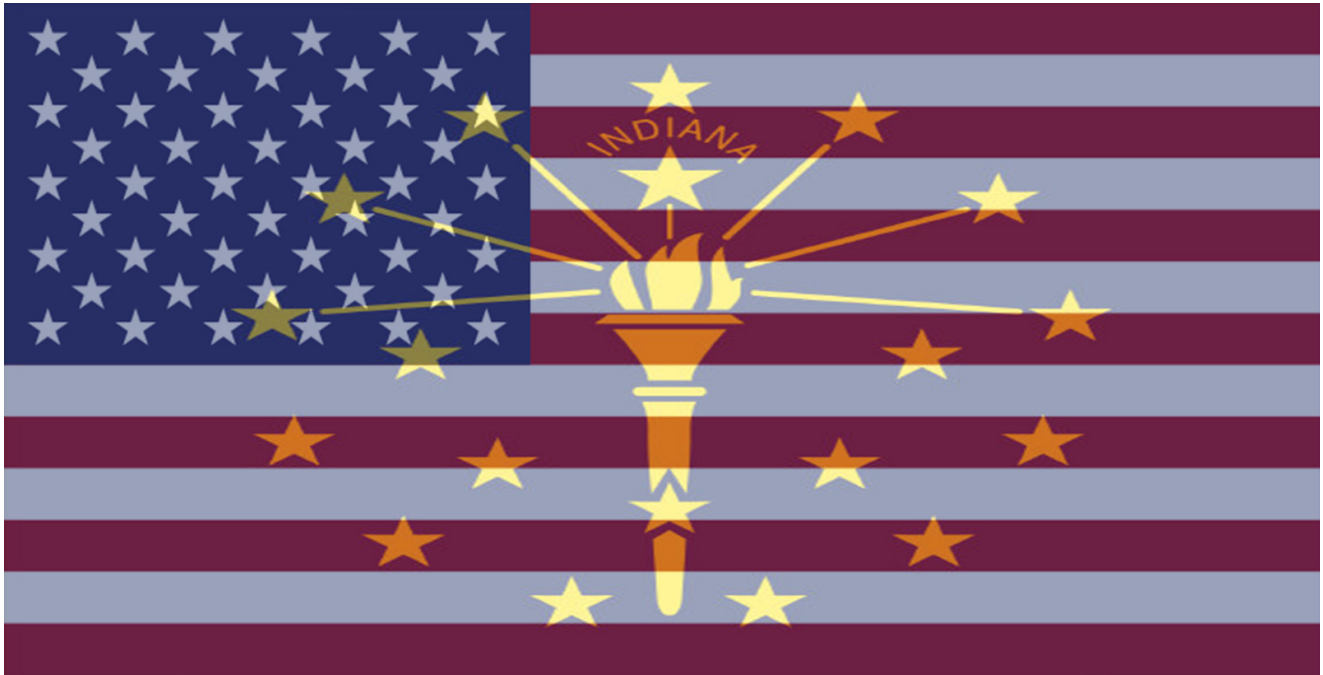
History of the “Checkered Band” of the Chicago Police Department

The “checkered band” on hats worn by Chicago Police Department officers was introduced in May 1967 by Superintendent O.W. Wilson. The design was based on the three-layer “Sillitoe Tartan” first used in 1932 by the Glasgow Police Department in Scotland and named after Chief Constable Percy J. Sillitoe.



Supt. Wilson chose to use a two-layer pattern, with white and dark blue for police officers, and yellow and dark blue for supervisors. Security guards in Chicago were prohibited from using this hat design as a means to immediately distinguish city police officers from private security guards.

Only a few departments in the United States wear a checkered band on their uniform hats, including the Cook County Sheriff’s Police Department as well as a few Chicago suburban agencies and the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police in Pennsylvania, who wear the three-layer version.




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