



Australian  
**BORDER FORCE**

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## Freedom of Information (FOI) Request - FA 24/10/00730

The meaning of the 'pips' used in the rank insignia of the ABF from the rank of Border Force Inspector onwards

### 4. Symbolism and Insignia

- 4.1 Our badge and insignia has a deep and proud history, dating back pre-federation our symbolism has evolved throughout the years to best represent organisational functions of the era. Like other law enforcement agencies worldwide, BFOs wear a uniform with insignia that identify their rank and role.
- 4.2 Holding a privileged place at the border and in the community, BFOs exercise significant powers under Commonwealth law, such as detention, arrest, boarding a vessel, entry, search, questioning, seizure, use of force, and removal from Australia.
- 4.3 Instantly signalling authority and official status, the uniform is one of the most immediate, influential and essential tools that enable BFOs to effectively enact the powers and authority which they hold.

#### 4.4. ABF Badge

- 4.4.1 The ABF badge (also known as ABF enforcement badge) is the formal symbol of the ABF, and is fundamental to identifying an ABF employee, building, vehicle or vessel. The *Trade Marks Act 1995 (Cth)* prohibits unlawful use of our badge.
- 4.4.2 The badge has a similar style to the badges of other Australian law enforcement agencies. Each element has a unique meaning as the Commonwealth of Australia's frontline border law enforcement agency and customs service. There are five elements in the badge:
  - a) [The Crown](#)
  - b) [Laurel wreath](#)
  - c) [Commonwealth Coat of Arms](#)
  - d) Gold bars
  - e) The words.

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The ABF Badge (also known as ABF Enforcement Badge)



The ABF Badge uniform shoulder patch worn by sworn Border Force Officers

## 4.5. Rank Insignia

4.5.1 Following Commonwealth military and law enforcement tradition, we wear rank insignia to acknowledge seniority, experience and responsibilities, along with being able to easily identify an officer's ability to apply certain delegations and legislated powers. Worn on a uniform shoulder epaulette, the ABF rank insignia is placed against an ink navy coloured 'slide', comprising of four components:

- a) Crown of St. Edward
- b) Star of the Order of the Bath
- c) Portcullis
- d) Stripe(s) and bar.



Rank insignia of the Australian Border Force

#### 4.5.2 Stripe

The 'stripe' also known as a chevron first came from medieval heraldry, with military and police agencies using a stripe or chevron to depict non-commissioned ranks. The ABF use up to three stripes to indicate ranks below Inspector.

#### 4.5.3 Bath Star

Also known as a 'star' or 'pip', this element comes from the insignia of the Knight Grand Cross of the Military Division of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath. The rank of Inspector or above wear the Bath Star. An Inspector wears three in a line. More senior ranks may wear up to three with a crown.

#### 4.5.4 Crown

As depicted in the ABF badge, the Crown of St. Edward is the current official coronation crown used during the reign of Elizabeth II. In 2022, the Tudor Crown was chosen as the symbol of heraldry upon the accession of King Charles III as the Commonwealth head of state. Last officially used from 1902 to 1953, it will replace the St. Edwards Crown symbolising the sovereign authority.

In Australia, the transition to the King Charles III Tudor Crown is likely to begin with specific Vice-Regal ceremonial emblems. A pragmatic approach to integrating the Tudor Crown into insignia for logos, crests and badges with government, public safety and first responder agencies across Australia. This is expected to take time, and will be at the discretion of individual organisations.

As the custodians of Australian national symbols, further advice and direction will be provided by the [Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet](#).

The crown is used with the Bath Star to indicate a Superintendent, with additional Bath Stars indicating more senior ranks.

**Notes:**

1. Source: Department of Home Affairs

**Caveats:**

- *This information is provided for the specific purpose of this request.*
- *It is the responsibility of the area providing the Department of Home Affairs information to external stakeholders to ensure that the disclosure is in accordance with the ABF Act, Australian Privacy Principles or other relevant legislation.*