

## The Creation of Popular Sunglasses: The Mirrorshades

It seems like every time you see a movie or TV show where police officers are involved, they seem to be wearing large sunglasses with mirrors on the outside. What are these shades and how did they come to be what they are today? The truth is that Mirrorshades, as the sunglasses are called, are often associated with law enforcement and government officials for a valid reason.

Mirrorshades are sunglasses with a reflective optical coating on the outside of the lenses to make them appear like small mirrors. The mirror coating can decrease anywhere from 10%-60% of the light that passes through and makes contact with your eyes. Mirrorshades are great sunglasses for anyone that spends much of their time outdoors, possibly even on a motorcycle or in a car for eight or more hours per day.

However, Mirrorshades serve a greater purpose than simply shielding the eye. These sunglasses prevent another person from making eye contact with the wearer. The mirrors are created so that an onlooker will only meet his own reflection when attempting to gaze into the eyes behind a pair of Mirrorshades.

It is for this reason that Mirrorshades have become popular sunglasses for officers of law enforcement and military. Their popularity with police officers in the United States has earned them the nickname "cop shades". Much like an interrogation room, a suspect is unnerved by looking into a window and being unable to see who or what is looking back at him. It is also for this reason that Mirrorshades are often favored by competitive poker players.

Mirrorshades are available in several different designs. The sunglasses most frequently worn by police and military are Aviators. This style received its name around the 1940's and 1950's when they were popular sunglasses for military pilots. In the 1930's, Ray Ban created this design and sold it to the United States Military. The military issued the sunglasses to their pilots to protect them while they flew. From there a fixture among sunglass styles was created.

Another particularly popular style of Mirrorshades is called the Wraparound. This style of sunglasses consists of either one or two smooth, semi-circular lenses that cover the eyes and resemble the shape of protective goggles. Wraparound sunglasses are quite popular in the world of extreme sports. They are often particularly associated with snow sports, such as skiing and snowboarding.

The Mirrorshades are created with a coating on the outside of the lenses of the sunglasses. The coating can range from a very simple form made up of a single

layer of very thin film all the way to a thicker, more reflective form. The thinner layer of film can be very likely to scratch with minimal pressure, and is sensitive to salt water. These sunglasses should be treated with the utmost care.

The more modern reflective coatings on Mirrorshades usually have several layers making them more durable and less likely to become scratched. While these sunglasses may be more expensive, you often get what you pay for when purchasing sunglasses. Choose wisely and educate yourself on sunglasses before deciding which ones to buy. Mirrorshades will prove beneficial to your eyes and your style.