



COMDTINST 1000.1C
Dec 29 2016

COMMANDANT INSTRUCTION 1000.1C

Subj: TATTOO, BODY MARKING, BODY PIERCING, AND MUTILATION POLICY

Ref: (a) Uniform Regulations, COMDTINST M1020.6 (series)

1. PURPOSE. This Instruction states the Coast Guard’s policies and standards on Tattoos and Body Markings, which applies to new accessions and current active duty/reserve members. This Instruction ensures our workforce presents a sharp, professional military appearance to the public while also allowing individual expression through authorized body art that is consistent with the Coast Guard’s core values.
2. ACTION. All Coast Guard unit commanders, commanding officers, officers-in-charge, deputy/assistant commandants, and chiefs of headquarters staff elements shall comply with the provisions of this Instruction. Internet release is authorized.
3. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED. Tattoo, Body Marking, Body Piercing and Mutilation Policy, COMDTINST 1000.1B is cancelled.
4. DISCLAIMER. This guidance is not a substitute for applicable legal requirements, nor is it itself a rule. It is intended to provide operational guidance for Coast Guard personnel and is not intended to nor does it impose legally-binding requirements on any party outside the Coast Guard.
5. MAJOR CHANGES. Coast Guard policy on tattoos, branding, piercing, and other body art has changed over the years due to changes in society making body art more acceptable and desirable among a wide range of the population. This Instruction revision makes minimal, but important, changes to tattoo and brand location policy; addresses ultraviolet or black light tattoos; clarifies separation policy for violations; and formalizes tracking and reporting disqualification and separation actions based on this Instruction.
6. ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT AND IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS. Environmental considerations were examined in the development of the Directive and have been determined to be not applicable.

DISRIBUTION – SDL No. 168

	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z
A	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X					
B				X																						
C			X	X			X		X											X		X	X	X	X	X
D	X	X																								
E								X		X	X	X	X													
F																	X	X	X							
G			X	X	X																					
H																										

NON-STANDARD DISTRIBUTION:

7. DISTRIBUTION. No paper distribution will be made of this Instruction. An electronic version will be located on the following Commandant (CG-612) web sites.
Internet: <http://www.uscg.mil/directives/>, and
CGPortal: <https://cgportal2.uscg.mil/library/directives/SitePages/Home.aspx>.
8. RECORDS MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS. This Commandant Instruction has been thoroughly reviewed during the directives clearance process, and it has been determined there are no further records scheduling requirements, in accordance with Federal Records Act, 44 U.S.C. 3101 et seq., NARA requirements, and Information and Life Cycle Management Manual, COMDTINST M5212.12 (series).
9. POLICY VIOLATIONS. Active duty and reserve members whose tattoos or brands are determined to violate this Instruction due to content or location will be given the opportunity to seek competent medical advice regarding removal or alteration of the disqualifying tattoo or brand. Members who are unable or unwilling to take the steps to satisfy the requirements of this policy will be administratively separated from the Service. Cases involving officers will follow established determination board proceedings; cases involving enlisted personnel will be administratively separated for Convenience of the Government. All cases must be documented using an Administrative Remarks entry, Form CG-3307, in accordance with the samples provided in Enclosures (1) or (2), as appropriate.
10. LOCATION. No tattoo or brand, of any type, is authorized on the head, face (including inside the mouth), neck, or hands, except as described below. Enclosure (1) provides a sample Administrative Remarks entry, Form CG-3307, used for counseling on location restriction violations. Enclosure (3) contains sample visual images that violate this policy based on location. This sampling is not intended to be all inclusive.
 - a. Neck/Chest. The collar of the Coast Guard's short sleeve Tropical Blue uniform shirt serves as the reference point for the back and sides of the neck. No tattoo or brand may be visible above the Light Blue Shirt collar on the neck. In the case of a tattoo or brand very near the collarbone, the responsible authority must make a final evaluation to ensure that any tattoo or brand that is visible on the chest is no more than 1" above the v-neck undershirt that is worn with the Light Blue Shirt.
 - b. Hands. Tattoos or brands must not be below the wrist. A single tattoo in the form of a ring is authorized on the wearer's finger (not thumb); one tattoo per hand. The tattoo(s) will not extend past the knuckle or first joint of the finger, will be in good taste, and in compliance with the content restrictions in Paragraph 11 of this Instruction. The intent of this policy is not to deviate from Reference (a), which allows one ring per hand, whether in the form of a tattoo or a piece of jewelry.
 - c. Head/Face. Permanent eyeliner makeup in the form of cosmetic tattooing is authorized for female members. If worn, permanent eyeliner will be conservative, in good taste, and complementary to the wearer's complexion and the uniform. The tattoo(s) must not be brightly colored, must not be more than 1/8 inch width, and must not extend past the outer corner of the eye. No other permanent makeup is authorized.

11. CONTENT. Tattoos or brands anywhere on the body that promote racism/discrimination, indecency, extremist or supremacist philosophies, lawlessness, violence, or contain sexually explicit material are prohibited. Enclosure (2) provides a sample Administrative Remarks entry, Form CG-3307, for counseling on content restriction violations. Enclosure (4) contains a representative sample of visual images that may be considered to violate this policy based on content. This sampling is not all inclusive.
- a. Racist or discriminatory tattoos or brands are those that advocate the degradation of people based on race, ethnicity, national origin, or gender.
 - b. Indecent or sexually explicit tattoos or brands are those that contain a visual image, the dominant theme of which depicts or promotes graphic nudity, including sexual activities or organs, in a lustful way. Tattoos featuring fully exposed nudity are prohibited.
 - c. Extremist tattoos or brands are those that depict or promote extremist activities or organizations that advocate hatred, intolerance, or lawlessness (e.g., terrorist groups, neo-Nazis, skinheads, outlaw gangs, extreme political organizations with violent histories). Because some extremist/criminal groups and organizations exploit popular symbols (e.g., cartoon characters), care must be taken in evaluating such tattoos or brands so as not to implicate members who may have selected the tattoo or brand based on its artistic value rather than a hidden meaning. In these cases, a determination will be made based on the totality of thematic elements expressed by tattoos or brands elsewhere on the body.
 - d. Tattoos or brands labeled violent or promoting lawlessness are those that depict extreme graphic violence, profanity, glorifications of drug culture, or markings that can reasonably be interpreted as anti-government in nature.
 - e. Commands seeking additional information regarding the origin or meaning of potentially discriminatory, extremist or lawless markings may review the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) Reference Guide "Hate on Display: Extremist Symbols, Logos and Tattoos", 4th Ed., or consult the ADL visual database at www.adl.org/.

12. COVERAGE OF AREA.

- a. In the case of tattoos, members are authorized tattoos with no limitation on size or percentage of coverage subject to location and content restrictions listed in Paragraphs 10 and 11 of this Instruction.
- b. In the case of branding, no more than one brand, not to exceed 4" x 4", is authorized subject to location and content restrictions listed in Paragraphs 10 and 11 of this Instruction.

13. TATTOO INK. Ultraviolet (UV) or black light tattoos are made with a special ink that is typically only visible under ultraviolet light. UV tattoos must be treated the same as those applied with typical ink and colors.

14. BODY PIERCING.

- a. No piercing, other than those for earrings as described below, will be made through the ear, nose, tongue, chin, eyebrow, or any other body part that would be visible while in any uniform. This prohibition applies to male and female members alike and is specifically intended to limit the less-than-military appearance associated with vacant holes in the face or other exposed areas of the body. Ear piercing must not exceed two per ear lobe and must be small and inconspicuous. Additional ear lobe and cartilage piercings are prohibited. Consult Reference (a) for guidance regarding women wearing earrings while in uniform.
- b. Piercings concealed by the uniform (such as, navel and nipples) are strongly discouraged due to the potential for infection and medical complications. Under no circumstance will such concealed piercing and accompanying jewelry be visible through, or interfere with, the professional appearance or performance of the member in uniform, nor will such jewelry be visible while onboard a Coast Guard unit, including while in civilian dress.
- c. All members are prohibited from wearing forms of facial jewelry (other than earrings for women) while in uniform, on board a military installation, or while attending a command-sponsored event.
- d. Personnel with preexisting unauthorized piercings must discontinue use of those piercings to allow for eventual healing. Questionable cases should be referred to Commandant (CG-133) for final determination.

15. BODY MUTILATION OR MODIFICATION. Other forms of intentional body mutilation or modification are not authorized; examples include, scarring, excessive ear piercing/stretching, tongue splitting, beneath the skin decorative implants, decorative tooth plating/engraving, etc. This prohibition does not include traditional elective medical procedures, such as, teeth straightening, breast augmentation, cosmetic plastic surgery, etc.

16. DISQUALIFYING TATTOOS, BRANDS, PIERCINGS, OR MUTILATIONS. Applicants for enlistment or appointment with prohibited tattoos, brands, or mutilations described in Paragraphs 10, 11, and 12 must not be permitted to join the Coast Guard or Coast Guard Reserve. Initially unqualified applicants who choose to either alter or remove a disqualifying tattoo, brand, or mutilation may be reconsidered at a later date, provided they remain qualified for enlistment in all other respects; however, no commitment will be made suggesting that removal or alteration of a tattoo or brand will ensure Coast Guard acceptance. Applicants with excess piercings that do not rise to the level of mutilation will be given the option to discontinue use of the unauthorized piercings or be separated.

17. GRANDFATHERING. Those members whose tattoos and/or brands were grandfathered after the 17 June 2005 Tattoo, Body Marking, Body Piercing, and Mutilation Policy, COMDTINST 1000.1A, as evidenced with an Administrative Remarks entry, Form CG 3307, are considered grandfathered under this Instruction and no further administrative action is required. In cases where the member's record contains an Administrative Remarks entry, Form CG-3307, which is more restrictive than this Instruction, this policy takes precedence. The Administrative Remarks entry, Form CG-3307, contained in a member's record must accurately reflect the member's status at the time of issuance and, while they may be superseded by current policy, these documents must remain a permanent part of the record.

18. RESPONSIBILITY.

- a. Commanding Officer, Coast Guard Recruiting Command (CGRC) will ensure compliance with this policy for all enlisted and non-Coast Guard Academy officer accessions. CGRC is the final approving authority for all accession tattoo issues, other than those accessions managed by the Coast Guard Academy.
- b. Superintendent, Coast Guard Academy will ensure compliance with this policy for all cadets and Coast Guard Academy Scholars.
- c. Commanding Officer, Coast Guard Training Center Cape May must annotate recruit records, as appropriate.
- d. Commandant (CG-133) serves as the final authority for determinations involving the acceptability of tattoos/brands not otherwise listed and for any other cases in which there are questions concerning applicability of this Instruction.

19. REPORTING.

- a. Commanding Officer, CGRC and Superintendent, Coast Guard Academy must report to Commandant (CG-133), at the end of each fiscal year, the number of prospective accessions disqualified for accession based on this Instruction. The report will include a count of individuals disqualified for accession based on location (head, neck, hand, etc.), type (tattoo, brand, piercing), and/or content.
- b. Commander (CG PSC) must report to Commandant (CG-133), at the end of each fiscal year, the number of current members separated based on this Instruction. The report will include a count of individuals disqualified for service based on location (head, neck, hand, etc.), type (tattoo, brand, piercing), and/or content.

20. FORMS/REPORTS. The forms referenced in this Instruction are available in USCG Electronic Forms on the Standard Workstation or on the Internet: <https://cgportal2.uscg.mil/library/forms/SitePages/Home.aspx>; CG Portal: <https://cgportal2.uscg.mil/library/directives/SitePages/Home.aspx>; and Intranet: <http://cgweb.comdt.uscg.mil/CGForms>.

21. REQUEST FOR CHANGES. Recommendations for changes or improvements to Tattoo, Body Marking, Body Piercing and Mutilation Policy, COMDTINST 1000.1 (series), are welcome and should be submitted via the chain of command to the Office of Military Personnel, Policy and Standards Division, Commandant (CG-1331), at HQS-PolicyandStandards@uscg.mil.

KURT B. HINRICHS /s/
Rear Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard Reserve
Director of Reserve and Military Personnel

- Encl: (1) Sample CG-3307, Administrative Remarks for Tattoo/Brand Location
(2) Sample CG-3307, Administrative Remarks for Tattoo/Brand Content
(3) Sample Body Markings
(4) Samples of Inappropriate Content

PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Sample CG-3307
Administrative Remarks for Tattoo/Brand Location

Entry Type: Performance and Discipline (P&D – 36)

Reference: Tattoo, Body Marking, Body Piercing and Mutilation Policy,
COMDTINST 1000.1 (series)

Responsible Level: Unit Entry:

(DATE): In accordance with the Tattoo, Body Marking, Body Piercing and Mutilation Policy, COMDTINST 1000.1 (series), tattoos/brands located anywhere on the head, face, neck above the Coast Guard Light Blue Shirt collar (as worn on the Tropical Blue uniform), visible on the chest more than 1” above the v-neck undershirt, or hands below the wrist, with the exception of permanent eyeliner makeup (females only), or ring tattoos, are prohibited, and are a basis for separation from the Service. The tattooing/branding on your _____ (neck/face/hand) has been evaluated and determined to be outside the bounds of current Coast Guard Tattooing and Branding policy. I encourage you to seek competent medical advice regarding the removal of the tattoo(s). You have until _____ to seek such advice and to make a decision. Should you choose not to remove the tattoo/brand, I will begin separation action. A description of the disqualifying tattoos/brands is as follows:

Left Hand: Ship's anchor between thumb and forefinger. Left Neck: Chinese symbol.

A.B. SEA, CAPT, USCG
Commanding Officer

(DATE): I acknowledge the above entry, have been afforded the opportunity to review the Tattoo, Body Marking, Body Piercing and Mutilation Policy, COMDTINST 1000.1 (series), and fully understand the action required.

J.P. JONES

PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Sample CG-3307

Administrative Remarks for Tattoo/Brand Content

Entry Type: Performance and Discipline (P&D – 35)

Reference: Tattoo, Body Marking, Body Piercing and Mutilation Policy,
COMDTINST 1000.1 (series)

Responsible Level: Unit Entry:

(DATE): In accordance the with Tattoo, Body Marking, Body Piercing and Mutilation Policy, COMDTINST 1000.1 (series), tattoos/brands anywhere on the body that are contrary to good order and discipline, are sexually explicit, or promote racism, discrimination, indecency, extremist philosophies, or lawlessness, are prohibited. Such tattoos/brands/markings are a basis for separation from the Service. The tattoo/brand on your (arm/leg/back/etc.) has been evaluated and determined to be outside the bounds of current Coast Guard Tattoo/Brand policy based on its offensive content. There is no provision for waiving such tattoos/brands. I encourage you to seek competent medical advice regarding the removal or alteration of the tattoos/brands identified below. You have until _____ to seek such advice and to make a decision. Should you choose not to remove or alter the tattoo/brand, I will begin separation action. A description of the disqualifying tattoo/brand is as follows:

Left Arm: Naked mermaid. Right Leg: Swastika

A.B. SEA, CAPT, USCG
Commanding Officer

(DATE): I acknowledge the above entry, have been afforded the opportunity to review the Tattoo, Body Marking, Body Piercing and Mutilation Policy, COMDTINST 1000.1 (series), and fully understand the action required.

J.P. JONES

PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

SAMPLE BODY MARKINGS

Disqualifying Markings: Head, Neck, Chest, Hands

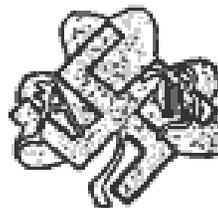
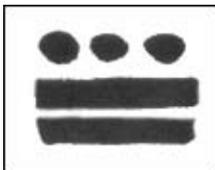
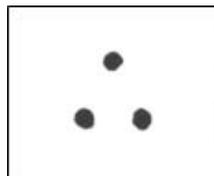


Acceptable, In-Policy Markings: Chest and Hands



PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

SAMPLES OF INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT



14

PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK