

TATTOO, BODY MARKING, BODY PIERCING, AND MUTILATION STANDARDS



COMDTINST 1000.1E
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U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

United States
Coast Guard



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COMDTINST 1000.1E
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COMMANDANT INSTRUCTION 1000.1E

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

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

1. PURPOSE. This Instruction covers the Coast Guard's policies and standards on tattoos, body marking, body piercing, and mutilation standards which applies incoming Coast Guard active and reserve duty (new accessions) and current active duty and reserve Coast Guard members.
2. ACTION. All Coast Guard unit commanders, commanding officers, officers-in-charge, deputy/assistant commandants, chief of headquarter directorates must comply with the policies contained.
3. AUTHORIZED RELEASE. Internet release is authorized.
4. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED. The Tattoo, Body Marking, Body Piercing, and Mutilation Policy, COMDTINST 1000.1D is hereby cancelled.
5. DISCUSSION. Coast Guard policy on this topic has changed over time in part due to the progression of acceptance within society thus making body art more publicly acceptable. The ability to recruit and retain talent remains important for the Coast Guard. This Instruction provides policy to ensure the uniformed workforce presents a sharp and professional military appearance to the public. This policy also allows for individual creativity and expression through authorized body art that is consistent with the Coast Guard's core values.
6. DISCLAIMER. This guidance is not a substitute for applicable legal requirements, nor is it itself a rule. It is intended to provide administrative guidance for Coast Guard personnel and is not intended nor does it impose legally-binding requirements on any party outside the Coast Guard.
7. MAJOR CHANGES. This Instruction updates the limitation on brands for new accessions and current members. It changes the point of reference for neck tattoos or brands to the

collar of the uniform crew neck t-shirt, authorizes permanent eyebrow makeup in the form of microblading, allows finger tattoos on one finger per hand located between the first and second knuckle (closest to wrist), and allows for one tattoo behind one ear only, that is no larger than one inch in measurement in any dimension.

8. SCOPE AND AUTHORITIES. It is recommended the reader become familiar with Uniform Regulations, COMDTINST M1020.6 (series) as Reference (a).
9. ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT AND IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS.
 - a. Office of Environmental Management, Commandant (CG-47) reviewed the development of this Instruction, and the general policies contained within it, and determined that this policy falls under the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) categorical exclusion A3. No further environmental analysis is necessary in accordance with the U.S. Coast Guard Environmental Planning Policy, COMDTINST 5090.1 (series).
 - b. This Instruction will not result in any substantial change to existing environmental conditions or violation of any applicable federal, state, or local laws relating to the protection of the environment. It is the responsibility of the action proponent to evaluate all future specific actions resulting from this policy for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), other applicable environmental mandates, and the U.S. Coast Guard Environmental Planning Policy, COMDTINST 5090.1 (series).
10. DISTRIBUTION. No paper distribution will be made of this Instruction. An electronic version will be located in the Coast Guard Directives System Library internally, and if applicable on the Internet at www.dcms.uscg.mil/directives , and CGPortal: cg.portal.uscg.mil/library/directives/SitePages/Home.aspx .
11. RECORDS MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS. Records created as a result of this Instruction, regardless of format or media, must be managed in accordance with the records retention schedule located on the Records Resource Center CGPortal site: cg.portal.uscg.mil/units/cg61/CG611/SitePages/Home.aspx .
12. POLICY ON TATTOO AND BRAND
 - a. Location of Tattoo Placement. All tattoos will be in good taste and in compliance with the content restrictions in Section 12.b of this Instruction. No tattoo or brand, of any type, is authorized on the head, face, inside the mouth, neck, or hands, except as described below. A brand is defined as a picture, design, or other marking that is purposefully burned into the skin or other areas of the body through application or heat or chemicals. Enclosure (1) provides a sample for an entry on an Administration Remarks, Form CG-3307 that should be used to document unauthorized tattoo placement.
 - (1) Neck/Chest. The reference point for a tattoo or brand on the forward half of the neck or chest is the top collar edge of a standard crew neck t-shirt. No tattoo or brand may

- be visible above the top collar of a standard crew neck t-shirt. The reference point for tattoos on the back of the neck is the top collar edge of the tropical blue long shirt. No tattoo may be visible above the top collar of the tropical blue long shirt.
- (2) Hands. A single tattoo per hand, no larger than one inch in any dimension is authorized on the hand between the wrist and the first knuckle (closest to the wrist). Tattoos on the palm of the hand are not authorized.
 - (3) Fingers. A single finger tattoo per hand between the first knuckle (closest to the wrist) and the fingertip, on the top or side of the finger, is authorized and may be visible at the position of attention. A ring tattoo is the equivalent of a finger tattoo and must be between the first and second knuckle if it encircles the finger. The intent of this policy is not to deviate and remain consistent with Reference (a), which allows one ring per hand, whether in the form of a tattoo or a piece of jewelry.
 - (4) Face. One tattoo behind one ear that is no larger than one inch in measurement in any dimension (height/width) is allowed. Permanent eyeliner and eyebrow makeup in the form of cosmetic tattooing is authorized for female members. Permanent eyeliner must be conservative, in good taste, and complementary to the wearer's complexion and uniform. Eyeliner makeup must not be brightly colored, no more than 1/8 inch width, and not extend past the outer corner of the eye. Eyebrow microblading is authorized for all members. It is a cosmetic tattooing procedure that typically creates shorter term tattooing results (less permanent). Eyebrow microblading results must blend naturally and match the member's own natural appearance. This procedure is often used to create an illusion of brows when they are thinning or absent. No other permanent face makeup is authorized.
- b. Context. Tattoos or brands anywhere on the body that could promote racism, discrimination, indecency, extremism or supremacist philosophies, lawlessness, violence, or contain sexually explicit material are prohibited. Enclosure (2) provides a sample Administrative Remarks, Form CG-3307 to document unauthorized tattoo content. Prohibited content includes:
- (1) Racist or discriminatory tattoos or brands that advocate the degradation of people based on race, ethnicity, national origin, or gender.
 - (2) Indecent or sexually explicit tattoos or brands 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.
 - (3) Extremist tattoos or brands 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.
- (4) 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 advocating the violent overthrow of state or federal government.
- c. Coverage of Body Area. In the case of tattoos, members are authorized tattoos with no limitations on size or percentage of coverage, with the exception of those listed throughout Section 12.a of this Instruction.
- (1) Applicants to the Coast Guard may have multiple brands, subject to the location and content restrictions in Sections 12.a and 12.b of this Instruction. Any applicant admitted to the Coast Guard with more than one brand must have all brands documented by Administrative Remarks entry, Form CG-3307.
- (2) Current members with no brands may receive no more than one brand, not to exceed 4" X 4", subject to location and content restrictions list in Section 12.a and 12.b of this Instruction. Current members with any brands must not receive additional brands while in the Coast Guard.
- d. 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 accessed and treated the same way as those applied with typical ink and colors.

13. POLICY ON BODY PIERCING AND JEWELRY

- a. Ear Piercing. Ear piercing is allowed. Ear piercings however must not exceed "two per ear lobe" and must be small and inconspicuous (no stretching or gages). Additional ear lobe and cartilage piercings are prohibited. Consult Reference (a) for guidance regarding women wearing earrings while in uniform.
- b. Body Piercing. No piercings, other than those for earrings as described herein, 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 and other exposed areas of the body.
- (1) Piercings concealed by the uniform (such as navel, nipples, genitals) are strongly discouraged due to the potential for medical complication including infection. Under no circumstances 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 at a Coast Guard unit, including while in civilian attire.

- (2) Additionally, all members are prohibited from wearing forms of facial jewelry (except earrings as authorized) while in uniform, onboard a military installation, or while attending a command-sponsored event (unless a costume ball/event). Examples include bejeweled facial adornments, embellishments, and accessories.
- (3) Personnel with preexisting unauthorized piercings must discontinue use of those piercings to allow for eventual healing.

14. POLICY ON BODY MUTILATION OR MODIFICATION

- a. Intentional Mutilation. Other forms of intentional body mutilation or modification are not authorized; include, scarring, excessive ear piercing or stretching, tongue splitting, beneath the skin decorative implants, decorative tooth plating/engraving, etc. Note, this prohibition does not include traditional elective medical procedures, such as, teeth straightening, breast augmentation, cosmetic plastic surgery, etc.
- b. Piercing not considered Mutilation. 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 for a new accession, or if on Active or reserve duty be separated.

15. POLICY ON GRANDFATHERING. Those members whose tattoos and/or brands were grandfathered after the 17 June 2005 Tattoo, Body Marking, Body Piercing, and Mutilation Policy, COMDTINST 1001.1A, as evidenced with an Administration 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, Form CG-3307, which is more restrictive than this Instruction, this policy takes precedence. The Administrative Remarks, Form 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.

16. POLICY ON DISQUALIFICATIONS. Applicants for enlistment or appointment with prohibited tattoos, brands, or mutilations described in Paragraphs 12, 13, and 14 of this Instruction 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.

17. POLICY ON VIOLATIONS AND POLICY DOCUMENTATION. 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 for

Convenience of the Government. Clarifications on standards in particular cases must be referred to Commandant (CG-133) for advisement and/or final determination. All cases must be documented using an Administrative Remarks, Form CG-3307, in accordance with samples provided in Enclosures (1) or (2), as appropriate.

18. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 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 (CGA). Will ensure compliance with this policy for all cadets and Coast Guard Academy Scholars.
- c. Commanding Officer, Coast Guard Training Center Cape May (TCM). Will ensure compliance with this policy must annotate recruit records, as appropriate in accordance with the policies contained herein.
- d. The Office of Military Personnel, Commandant (CG-133). Serves as the final authority for determinations involving the acceptability of tattoos or brands not otherwise listed and for any other cases in which there are questions concerning applicability of this Instruction. Commands and members can send questions and clarification determinations to PolicyandStandards@uscg.mil.
- e. Commanding Officers/OICs. Will ensure compliance with this policy for all members in their command. All questions or clarifications on this policy can be emails to CG-133.
- f. Coast Guard Members. Will ensure they are familiar with policies in this Instruction.

19. FORMS. The forms referenced in this Instruction are available on the Coast Guard Standard Workstation or on the Internet: www.dcms.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/Assistant-Commandant-for-C4IT-CG-6/The-Office-of-Information-Management-CG-61/Forms-Management/.

20. REPORTS

- a. Individuals Disqualified for Accession. Commanding Officer, CGRC and Superintendent, Coast Guard Academy must report to Commandant (CG-13), at the end of each fiscal year, the number of prospective accessions disqualified for accession base 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. The report must include a photo or photos of each disqualifying tattoo(s) or brand(s) or piercing(s) for each individual.

- b. Members Separated. Commander (CG PSC) must report to Commandant (CG-13), at the end of each fiscal year, the number of current members separated base 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. The report must should include a photo or photos of each disqualifying tattoo(s) or brand(s) or piercing(s) for each individual.
21. SECTION 508. This Instruction adheres to Accessibility Guidelines and Standards as promulgated by the U.S. Access Board. If changes are needed, please communicate with the Coast Guard Section 508 Program Management Office at Section.508@uscg.mil .
22. REQUEST FOR CHANGES. Recommendations for changes or improvements to Tattoo, Body Marking, Body Piercing and Mutilation Standards, 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 PolicyandStandards@uscg.mil .

/ANTHONY W. WILLIAMS/
Captain, U. S. Coast Guard
Acting Director of Military Personnel

Encl: (1) Sample Content for CG-3307, Administrative Remarks for Tattoo/Brand Location
(2) Sample Content for CG-3307, Administrative Remarks for Tattoo/Brand Content

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): The tattooing/branding on your _____ (neck/face/hand) has been determined to be against the Coast Guard's Tattoo, Body Marking, Body Piercing and Mutilation Policy, Commandant Instruction 1000.1 (series). 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: Skull tattoo larger than 1" in any dimension.

Left Neck: Chinese characters.

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

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 depicting intimate areas of the female body.

Right Leg: Swastika 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