

TATTOO, BRANDING, BODY PIERCING, AND MUTILATION STANDARDS



COMDTINST 1000.1F
May 2024

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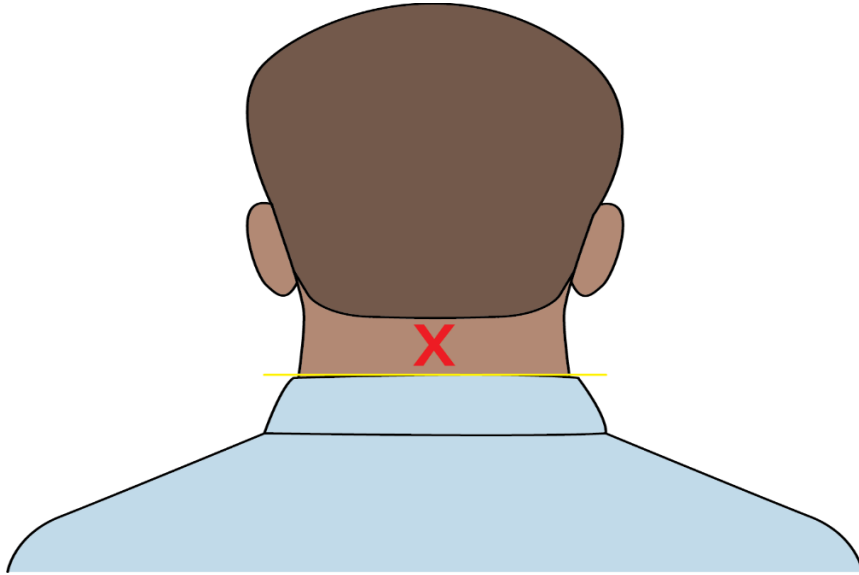
COMMANDANT INSTRUCTION 1000.1F

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

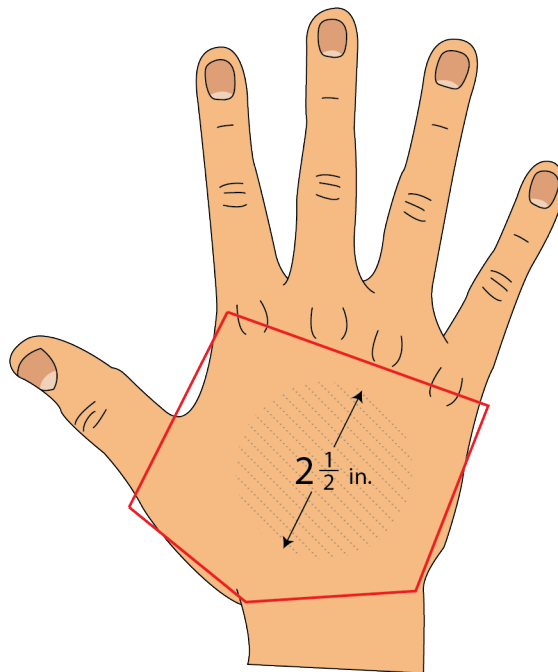
Ref: (a) Uniform Regulations, COMDTINST M1020.6 (series)

1. PURPOSE. This Instruction promulgates Coast Guard policy and standards on tattoos, branding, body piercing, and mutilation for accession points, applicants, active duty, and reserve 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 herein.
3. AUTHORIZED RELEASE. Internet release is authorized.
4. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED. Tattoo, Body Marking, Body Piercing, and Mutilation Standards, COMDTINST 1000.1E is hereby cancelled.
5. BACKGROUND. Coast Guard policy on this topic has changed over time as body art has become increasingly acceptable in mainstream society. 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 policy for tattoo waiver requests and expands the reference area, location, and size allowed for tattoo and brand placement located in paragraphs 12 and 13 of this Instruction. The title has been changed for clarity.
8. SCOPE AND AUTHORITIES. This Instruction applies to all active and reserve service members as well as Coast Guard applicants. It is recommended the reader also become familiar with Reference (a).

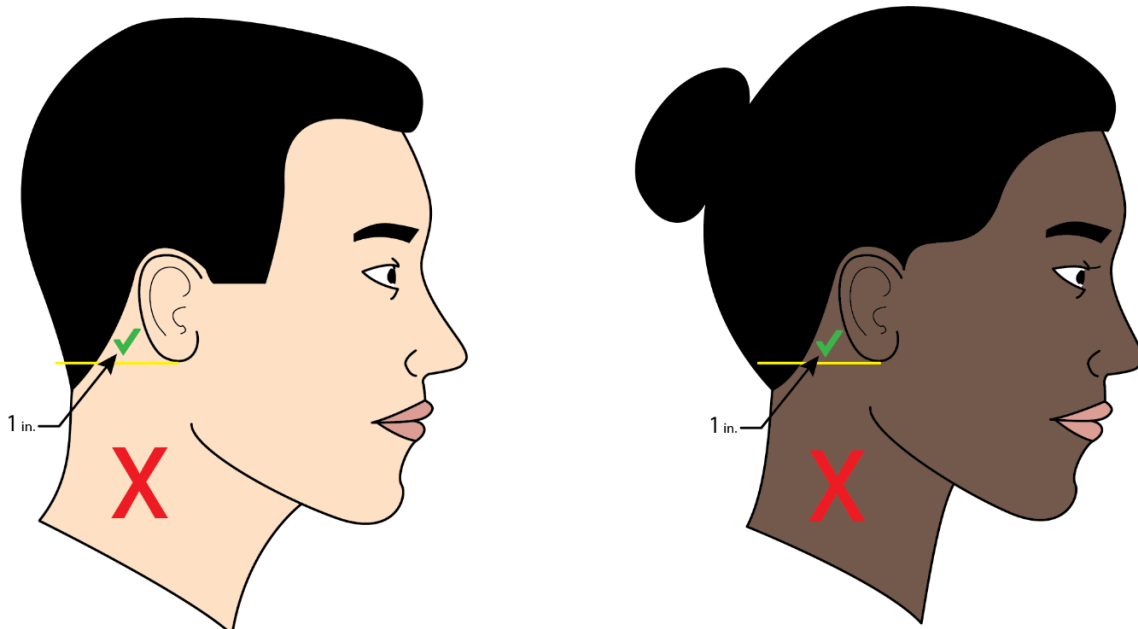
9. ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT AND IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS. The Office of Environmental Management, Commandant (CG-47) reviewed this Commandant Instruction and the general policies contained within and determined that this policy falls under the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) categorical exclusion A3. This Commandant 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 requirements, and the U.S. Coast Guard Environmental Planning Policy, COMDTINST 5090.1 (series).
10. DISTRIBUTION. Electronic distribution in the Directives System Library. Intranet/Pixel Dashboard: Directives Pubs, and Forms - PowerApps (appsplatform.us) . If Internet released: Commandant Instructions (uscg.mil), Coast Guard Forms (uscg.mil) .
11. RECORDS MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS. Records created as a result of this Instruction, regardless of format or media, must be managed in accordance with Records & Information Management Program Roles and Responsibilities, COMDTINST 5212.12 (series) and the records retention schedule located on the Records Resource Center Microsoft SharePoint site at: <https://uscg.sharepoint-mil.us/sites/cg61/SitePages/CG-611-RIM.aspx>.
12. TATTOO PLACEMENT AND RESTRICTIONS. Members are authorized to have tattoos without limitation on body coverage except for specific restricted locations listed in this paragraph. All tattoos will be in good taste and in compliance with the content restrictions in paragraph 14 of this Instruction. No tattoo, of any type, is authorized on the head, face, neck, hands, within the natural hairline, or inside of the mouth, except as described below. Unauthorized tattoo placement must be documented on an Administrative Remarks, Form CG-3307.
 - a. Neck. No tattoo will be visible above the uppermost edge of the standard crew neck t-shirt when viewed from the front. The reference point for tattoos on the back of the neck is the top collar edge of the tropical blue shirt. Excluding permitted behind the ear tattoos per section 12.f. of this Instruction, no tattoo will be visible above the top collar of the standard tropical blue shirt. Example of authorized back of the neck tattoo placement and restrictions are below.




- b. Chest. No tattoo may be visible above the uppermost edge of a standard crew neck T-shirt.
- c. Hands. A single tattoo per hand, no larger than two- and one-half inches in any direction (height/width/diameter), is authorized on the back of the hand. No tattoo is authorized on the palm of the hand excluding ring tattoos as described in Paragraph 12.d. of this Instruction. The authorized location for a tattoo on the back of the hand is within an area bound by an imaginary line drawn across the finger and thumb knuckles closest to the wrist, and an imaginary line drawn between the wrist bones. Example of authorized hand tattoo placement and restrictions are below.



- d. 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. This policy remains consistent with Reference (a), which allows one ring per hand, whether in the form of a tattoo or a piece of jewelry. Excluding a single ring tattoo, no tattoo is authorized on the palm-side of the fingers.
- e. Face. Cosmetic tattooing as described below is authorized. No other permanent face makeup or tattoo is authorized on the face.
- (1) Permanent Makeup: 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.
- (2) Eyebrow Microblading: 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. No other permanent face makeup is authorized.
- f. Behind the Ear. One tattoo behind each ear, no larger than one inch in measurement in any dimension (height/width/diameter), is authorized. The reference line for a tattoo behind the ear must begin from a horizontal plane between the top of the ear and lowest point of the earlobe. No tattoo, in whole or in part, is authorized on or in front of the ear. No tattoo may extend into the natural hairline. Members without natural hair lines, such as those experiencing hair loss, must use a maximum distance of one inch from the point where the ear attaches to the head. Example of authorized behind the ear tattoo placement and restrictions are below.



- g. Tattoo Ink. Ultraviolet (UV) or black light tattoos are created using special ink that is usually only visible under UV light. UV tattoos should be evaluated and managed in the same manner as those made with conventional ink and colors.
13. BRAND PLACEMENT. All brands will be in good taste and in compliance with the content restrictions in paragraph 14 of this Instruction. No brand, of any type, is authorized on the head, face, inside the mouth, neck, and hands. A brand is defined as a picture, design, or other marking that is purposefully burned into the skin through application of heat, cold, or chemicals. Unauthorized brand placement must be documented on an Administrative Remarks, Form CG-3307 (P&D 36). The number of brands authorized depends on the member's status as described below:
- Coast Guard Applicants. Coast Guard applicants may have multiple brands, subject to the location and content restrictions in paragraphs 13 and 14 of this Instruction. Any applicant admitted to the Coast Guard with more than one brand must have all brands documented by Administrative Remarks, Form CG-3307 (P&D 37). Once accessed, members with approved brands upon entry are not authorized to receive additional brands while in active service in the Coast Guard.
 - Current Servicemembers. Current members with no brands may receive no more than one brand, not to exceed four inches in any direction (height/width/diameter), subject to location and content restrictions list in paragraphs 13 and 14 of this Instruction. Current members accessed into the Service with brands are not authorized to receive additional brands while in the Coast Guard.
14. TATTOO AND BRAND CONTENT. Tattoos or brands promoting racism, discrimination, indecency, extremism, supremacist philosophies, lawlessness, violence, or containing sexually explicit material are prohibited, regardless of their location on the body. Unauthorized tattoo and brand content must be documented on an Administrative Remarks, Form CG-3307 (P&D 35). Prohibited content includes:
- Discriminatory. Discriminatory tattoos or brands that advocate the degradation of people based on race, ethnicity, national origin,  sex, or other factors.
 - Sexually Explicit. Tattoos or brands that are indecent or sexually explicit, containing visual images or dominant themes depicting or promoting graphic nudity, including sexual activities or organs in a lustful manner, are prohibited. Additionally, tattoos featuring fully exposed nudity are also prohibited.
 - Extremist. 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.

- d. Lawlessness. Tattoos or brands promoting violence or lawlessness are those that depict extreme graphic violence, profanity, glorifications of drug culture, or markings that can reasonably be interpreted as advocating the violent overthrowing of state or federal government.
15. BODY PIERCING AND JEWELRY. The following describes piercing authorizations. Personnel with unauthorized pre-existing piercings must discontinue use of those piercings to allow for eventual healing.
- a. Ear Piercing. Two small and inconspicuous piercings per ear lobe are authorized for women (no stretching or gauges). Additional ear lobe and cartilage piercings are prohibited. Consult Reference (a) for guidance regarding women wearing earrings while in uniform.
 - b. Visible Body Piercing. No piercings, other than those for earrings as described in paragraph 15.a. 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 appearance of vacant holes in the face and other exposed areas of the body.
 - c. Concealed Body Piercing. Piercings concealed by the uniform (such as navel, nipples, genitals) are strongly discouraged due to the potential for medical complications including infection. Under no circumstances should concealed piercing(s) and accompanying jewelry be visible through or interfere with the professional appearance or performance of the member in uniform. Additionally, such jewelry should not be visible while at a Coast Guard unit, including while in civilian attire.
 - d. Military Installations. All members are prohibited from wearing forms of facial jewelry (such as bejeweled facial adornments, embellishments, or accessories), except as authorized in Paragraph 15.a., while in uniform, onboard a military installation in civilian attire, or while attending a command-sponsored event (unless specifically authorized for a costume ball/event).
16. BODY MUTILATION OR MODIFICATION. Except for the tattoo, brand, and piercings authorized by this Instruction, other forms of intentional body mutilation or modification are prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, scarring, excessive ear piercing or stretching, tongue splitting, beneath the skin decorative implants, decorative tooth plating/engraving, etc.
- a. Option. Active duty or reserve members will be given the option to discontinue use of the unauthorized piercing(s) or be separated.
 - b. Exclusion. This prohibition does not include medically necessary procedures or traditionally elective procedures, such as, teeth straightening, cosmetic or other plastic surgeries, etc.
17. GRANDFATHERING. Those members whose tattoos and/or brands were grandfathered after the promulgation of Tattoo, Body Marking, Body Piercing, and Mutilation Standards,

COMDTINST 1001.1A (17 June 2005), as documented by an entry on Administration Remarks, 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. While such documentation may be superseded by current policy, the original document(s) must remain a permanent part of the record.

18. DISQUALIFICATION. Applicants for enlistment or appointment with prohibited tattoos, brands, body piercings, or mutilations described in paragraphs 12, 13, 15, and 16 of this Instruction must not be permitted to join the Coast Guard or Coast Guard Reserve. Disqualified applicants who choose to either alter or remove a disqualifying tattoo, brand, body piercing, 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.
19. DOCUMENTATION OF VIOLATIONS. Active duty and reserve members whose tattoos, brands, body piercings, or mutilations are determined to violate this Instruction will be given the opportunity to seek competent medical advice regarding removal or alteration of the disqualifying tattoo, brand, body piercing, or mutilation. Members who are unable or unwilling to satisfy the requirements of this policy or reasonable removal/compliance plan with their command will be administratively separated. All cases must be documented using an Administrative Remarks, Form CG-3307, as appropriate.
20. WAIVERS. Member requests for waivers to this Instruction must be in standard Coast Guard memo format and sent through their command to Commandant (CG-1M1) via email at: HQSPolicyandStandards@uscg.mil. Waiver requests may be considered for tattoo location and size only. Waiver requests for content will not be considered under any circumstances.
 - a. Applicants. Accession points must send waiver requests on behalf of applicants through their applicable accession point command, for example, Coast Guard Recruiting Command or Coast Guard Academy, as applicable, to Commandant (CG-1M1). Requests must include photo(s) with a ruler for scale in photo.
 - b. Waiver Decisions. Only waivers that receive written approval from Commandant (CG-1M1) are authorized, to the extent expressly stated in the written approval.
21. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.
 - a. The Office of Military Personnel Policy, Commandant (CG-1M1). Commandant (CG-1M1) maintains this Instruction and is the final authority for tattoo, brand, and piercing determinations, including any cases not expressly covered by this Instruction.
 - b. Commanding Officer, Coast Guard Recruiting Command (CGRC). Commanding Officer, CGRC, will ensure compliance with this policy for all enlisted and non-Coast Guard Academy officer accessions. CGRC must screen all applicants in accordance with

- this Instruction. All applicant waiver requests must be routed through Commanding Officer, CGRC, to Commandant (CG-1M1) for approval.
- c. Superintendent, U.S. Coast Guard Academy (CGA). The Superintendent, CGA, must screen all CGA applicants in accordance with this Instruction. All CGA applicant waiver requests must be routed through Superintendent, CGA, to Commandant (CG-1M1) for approval.
 - d. Commanding Officers/Officers in Charge. Commands must ensure compliance with this policy for all members in their command.
 - e. Coast Guard Members. Active duty and reserve members are responsible for understanding and complying with this Instruction.
22. FORMS. Suggested changes or corrections for immediate action may be submitted to USCG.Forms@uscg.mil for Administrative Remarks, Form CG-3307.
 23. REPORTS. At the end of each fiscal year, Commanding Officer, CGRC and Superintendent, CGA, must report the number of accessions disqualified for entry based on this Instruction. Likewise, Commander (CG PSC) must report the number of servicemembers separated from active service as result of this Instruction. Reports must be made to the Assistant Commandant for Military Personnel, Commandant (CG-1M) to include detailed information regarding the disqualifying tattoo, brand, or piercing based on location (head, neck, hand, etc.) and/or content. The report must also include photo(s) of each disqualifying tattoo, brand, or piercing for each individual.
 24. SECTION 508. This policy is created to adhere to accessibility guidelines and standards as promulgated by the U.S. Access Board with consideration of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) requirements. If accessibility modifications are needed for this artifact, please communicate with the Section 508 Program Management Office (PMO) at Section.508@uscg.mil. Concerns or complaints for non-compliance of policy and/or artifacts may be directed to the Section 508 PMO, the Civil Rights Directorate (<https://www.uscg.mil/Resources/Civil-Rights/>) for the Coast Guard, or to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security at accessibility@hq.dhs.gov.
 25. REQUEST FOR CHANGES. Recommendations for changes or improvements to Tattoo, Branding, 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-1M11), at HQSPolicyandStandards@uscg.mil.

/MICHAEL W. RAYMOND/
 Rear Admiral, U. S. Coast Guard
 Assistant Commandant for Military Personnel