



APR 2 1999

COMDTINST 1000.1

COMMANDANT INSTRUCTION 1000.1

Subj: TATTOO AND BODY MARKINGS POLICY FOR COAST GUARD ACCESSIONS

Ref: (a) Uniform Regulations, COMDTINST M1020.6 (series)
(b) Medical Manual, COMDTINST M6000.1 (series)

1. PURPOSE. This Instruction establishes the Coast Guard's Tattoo and Body Markings Policy for Coast Guard Accessions.
2. ACTION. This Instruction applies to Commander, Coast Guard Personnel Command; Superintendent, Coast Guard Academy; and Commanding Officer, Training Center Cape May, NJ.
3. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED. The following instructions will be amended to reflect this policy: Uniform Regulations, COMDTINST M1020.6 (series), Recruiting Manual (COMDTINST M1100.2 (series)), Medical Manual (COMDTINST M6000.1 (series)), and the Personnel Manual (COMDTINST M1000.6).
4. BACKGROUND. A number of recruits reporting to accession commands have been deemed unsuitable due to tattoos or other types of body markings incompatible with the Coast Guard's core values. In order to alleviate the burden of processing these individuals for discharge and the associated costs, the Coast Guard must establish Tattoo and Body Markings Policy for Accessions.
5. DISCUSSION. Reference (a) states: "Every Coast Guard member is a representative of the United States government and their dress and conduct must be such as to reflect credit upon themselves, the Coast Guard, and the country." Furthermore section 1.G.8. of reference (a) states: "Tattoos, brands, or intentional scarring of the head and neck are prohibited." Furthermore, any markings of the body that are contrary to published basic core values of the Coast Guard, prejudicial to good order and discipline, or morale, or are of a nature to bring discredit upon the service are prohibited." Section 1.E. of reference (a) states: "No eccentricities or faddishness in appearance will be permitted. Judgments will be made by the command on prevailing military standards and traditions, not on civilian standards and customs."

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6. POLICY. Entrance may be denied to any applicant who has a tattoo or other applied body marking contrary to the core values of the Coast Guard which include, but are not limited to:
- a. Those which identify and espouse criminal or extremist organizations, which would include any group which advocates the use of force or violence, advocates supremacist causes, or otherwise engages in efforts to deprive individuals or groups of their civil rights based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation and/or national origin.
 - b. Those that are in any way linked to illegal drugs or drug use, such as images of marijuana or coca leaves; and any drug related words such as marihuana, cocaine, heroine, crack, speed, LSD, etc.
 - c. Those images that are sexual in nature, such as depicting sex organs, female breasts, and any words or expressions connoting sex organs, glands, sexual copulation, or other sexual activity.
 - d. Those with demeaning or disdainful racial images or suggest any racial or other discriminatory images, words or themes. For example, a swastika or image of a burning cross.

There will be tattoo designs or body markings that have multiple meanings that may not be universally/commonly known. For example, a symbol of a cartoon character may also be a gang symbol in one particular city. These cases shall be reviewed in accordance with paragraph 7.e. below.

7. PROCEDURES.
- a. Coast Guard Recruiting Offices shall question applicants as to whether they have any tattoos or body markings
 - b. Medical personnel will identify applicants with the questionable tattoos or other body markings as described above for policies stated in reference (b). Medical personnel shall then refer such applicants to the Recruiting Center or accession commands as applicable.
 - c. The Recruiting Center and accession commands will use the above as reference in determining appropriateness of body markings. Determinations of appropriateness will be documented on CG-3307 (Administrative Remarks). If determined appropriate for accession, it will be included with other documentation forwarded to the individual's next accession point. If the applicant is denied accession due to a determination of an inappropriate tattoo or other body marking, current recruiting policy for documentation will be followed.
 - d. Reasons for certain body markings should not be assumed. Coast Guard Recruiting Centers and other accession commands must ensure through questioning that the applicant

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be given a fair assessment and a determination is reached without personal bias or any predetermined outcome.

- e. When appropriateness cannot be determined by recruiting or other accession commands, the case shall be forwarded to Commandant (G-WPM). A description or photograph of the body marking and its location on the applicant's body along with a statement from the applicant indicating the meaning and or definition as appropriate will be forwarded to: Commandant (G-WPM), U. S. Coast Guard, 2100 Second Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20593-0001. Commandant (G-WPM) will review the questionable body marking(s), and inform the command and member of the decision.
- f. If subsequent to processing of the applicant, a prohibited tattoo or body marking is discovered at an accession command, Commanding Officer, Training Center Cape May or Superintendent, Coast Guard Academy may discharge the member. All other cases of inappropriate or questionable body markings shall be referred to Commandant (G-WPM).
- g. If an applicant meets all qualifications for enlistment except for a disqualifying body marking(s), an individual may reapply once the disqualifying marking has been removed or altered so as not to be disqualifying. All expenses incurred in the altering/removal process will be borne by the individual.

/s/ F. L. AMES

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