U.S. Department of Homeland Security
United States Coast Guard

Commandant
United States Coast Guard

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COMDTINST 1000.1B
31Aug2009

COMMANDANT INSTRUCTION 1000.1B

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

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

1. PURPOSE. This Instruction amends the Coast Guard's Tattoo and Body Markings Policy which applies to new accessions and current active duty/reserve members, and establishes new guidelines governing content, location, and amount of body coverage. Additionally, this policy reinforces the prohibition against forms of intentional body mutilation.

2. ACTION. Area, district, and sector commanders, commanders of maintenance and logistics commands, Commander Deployable Operations Group, commanding officers of headquarters units, deputy/assistant commandants for directorates, Judge Advocate General, and special staff offices at Headquarters shall ensure that the provisions of this Instruction are followed. Internet release is authorized.

3. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED. Tattoo, Body Marking, Body Piercing and Mutilation Policy, COMDTINST 1000.1A is cancelled.

4. BACKGROUND. Coast Guard policy on tattoos, branding, piercing, and other forms of body art has changed significantly over the recent years due to cultural changes in our society making these forms of body art more acceptable and desirable among a wide range of the population. The ultimate goal of this instruction is to ensure our workforce presents a sharp, professional military appearance to the public we serve while also allowing individual expression through authorized body art that is consistent with the Coast Guard's core values.

5. POLICY.
   a. Violations. Active duty and reserve members whose tattoos or brands are determined to violate this Instruction because of their content or location will be given the opportunity

	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	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1		1		1					
B				1																						
C			1	1			1		1											1		1	1	1	1	1
D	1	1																								
E								1		1	1	1	1													
F																	1	1	1							
G			1	1	1																					
H																										

to seek competent medical advice regarding the 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. These 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. Those members whose tattoos and/or brands were grandfathered after the 17 Jun 2005 Tattoo, Body Marking, Body Piercing, and Mutilation Policy Instruction (COMDTINST 1000.1A) as evidenced with an Administrative Remarks entry, Form CG 3307, are still 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 those contained in this policy, this policy takes precedence. The Administrative Remarks entry, Form CG-3307, contained in a member's record should accurately reflect the member's status at the time of issuance and while they may be superseded by current policy, these documents shall remain a permanent part of the member's record.

b. Location. No tattoos or brands on the arms shall extend below the wrist. 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, for counseling of location restriction violations. Enclosure (3) contains a sampling of visual images that violate this policy based on location. This sampling is not intended to be all inclusive.

(1) Neck. The Coast Guard Light Blue Shirt (as worn with the Tropical Blue uniform) collar serves as the reference point for the back and sides of the neck; i.e., no tattoo or brand may be visible above the collar of the Light Blue Shirt on the neck. In the case of a tattoo or brand very near the collarbone, a final evaluation must be made to ensure that no tattoo or brand is visible when wearing a v-neck undershirt and the Light Blue Shirt.

(2) Hands. Tattoos in the form of a ring are authorized on the wearer's fingers (not thumbs) with the limitation of one tattoo per hand. The tattoo(s) will not exceed 1/4 inch width, will be in good taste and in compliance with the content restrictions in paragraph 5.c. of this policy. The intent of this policy is not to deviate from the Uniform Regulations, COMDTINST M1020.6 (series), which allows one ring (whether in the form of a tattoo or a piece of jewelry) per hand.

(3) 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) shall not be brightly colored, shall be no more than 1/8th inch width, and must not extend past the outer corner of the eye. No other permanent makeup is authorized.

c. 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 personnel on content restriction violations. Enclosure (4) contains a representative sampling of visual images that may be considered to violate this policy based on content. This sampling is not intended to be all inclusive.

(1) Racist or discriminatory tattoos or brands are those that advocate the degradation of people based on race, ethnicity, national origin, or gender.

(2) 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.

(3) 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.

(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 anti-government in nature.

(5) 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/.

d. Coverage of Area. In the case of tattoos, members are authorized tattoos with no limitation on size or percentage of coverage subject to the restrictions listed in paragraphs 5.b. and 5.c. of this Instruction. In the case of branding, no more than one brand, not to exceed 4” x 4”, is authorized subject to the restrictions listed in paragraphs 5.b. and 5.c. of this Instruction.

e. Body Piercing. No piercing, other than those for earrings as described below, shall 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. Other 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 shall such concealed

piercing and accompanying jewelry be visible through, or interfere with, the professional appearance of the member in uniform, nor shall such jewelry be visible while onboard a Coast Guard unit. For females, piercing in the ear shall not exceed two per ear lobe and shall be small and inconspicuous. Additional piercing in the ear lobes and cartilage are prohibited. Guidance regarding the wearing of earrings by women while in uniform can be found in Uniform Regulations, COMDTINST M1020.6 (series). 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. Those personnel with preexisting unauthorized piercings shall discontinue the use of those piercings to allow for eventual healing. Questionable cases should be referred to Commandant (CG-122) for final determination.

f. Body Mutilation or Modification. Other forms of intentional body mutilation or modification (e.g. scarring, excessive ear piercing/stretching, tongue splitting, beneath the skin decorative implants, decorative tooth plating/engraving, etc.) are not authorized. This does not include traditional elective medical procedures (e.g., teeth straightening, breast augmentation, cosmetic plastic surgery, etc.).

g. Disqualifying Tattoos, Brands, Piercings, or Mutilations. Applicants for enlistment or appointment with prohibited tattoos, brands, or mutilations described in paragraphs 5.b. to 5.f. shall 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 of discontinuing the use of the unauthorized piercings throughout their Coast Guard service.

6. RESPONSIBILITY. Commanding Officer, Coast Guard Recruiting Command (CGRC) will ensure compliance with this policy for all enlisted and officer accessions other than the Coast Guard Academy. CGRC is the final approving authority for all accession tattoo issues other than those on cadets. Superintendent, Coast Guard Academy will ensure compliance with this policy for all cadets. Commanding Officer, Coast Guard Training Center Cape May must annotate recruit records as appropriate. Commandant (CG-122) will serve as the final authority for determinations involving the acceptability of tattoos/brands on personnel not otherwise listed and for any other cases in which there are questions concerning applicability of this Instruction. Internet release is authorized.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT AND IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS. Environmental considerations were examined in the development of the directive and have been determined to be not applicable.

8. FORMS AVAILABILITY. The forms referenced in this Instruction are available in USCG Electronic Forms on the Standard Workstation or on the Internet: http://www.uscg.mil/forms/, CG Central at http://cgcentral.uscg.mil/, and Intranet at http://CGWeb2.comdt.uscg.mil/CGdirectives/.

CURTIS B. ODOM /s/
Director of Personnel Management

Encl: (1) Sample CG-3307, Administrative Remarks, for Tattoo/Brand on Head, Neck, Face or Hands
(2) Sample CG-3307, Administrative Remarks, for Tattoo/Branding Content
(3) Samples of Disqualifying Markings
(4) Samples of Inappropriate Content

Sample CG-3307 for Tattoo/Brand on Head, Neck, Face, or Hands

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 collar of the Coast Guard Light Blue Shirt (as worn on the Tropical Blue uniform), 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

Sample CG-3307 for Tattoo/Branding 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

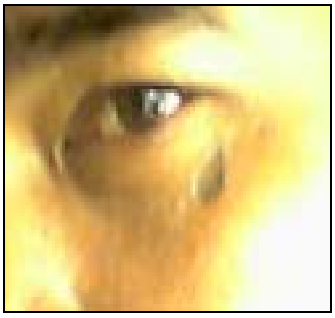
(DATE): I acknowledge the above entry, have been afforded the opportunity to review the Tattoo, Body Marking, Body Piercing and Mutilation Policy, COMDTINST 1000.1 (series), and fully understand the action required.

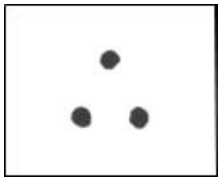
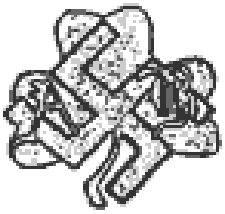
J. P. JONES

Encl. (3) to COMDTINST 1001.1B

SAMPLES OF DISQUALIFYING MARKINGS

Head & Neck



Hands

A Sampling of Inappropriate Content