

Body Markings Policy 8-3.01-K

KNOW the Coast Guard's Policy regarding tattoos, brands, and body piercing as presented in the E-PME Study Guide.

Tattoos, Brands, and Body Piercing Civilian standards, customs, and trends do not dictate policy for the military dress code. Chapter 2.A.1., Military Image, of COMDTINST M1020.6E provide the standards that apply to military personnel.

If commands have difficulty judging whether the tattoo/brand or body piercing is in accordance with the uniform regulations, they need to contact Uniform Regulation Program Management at Commandant (CG-122), USCG Headquarters in Washington, D.C. Final judgment will be made at this level.

Additional untestable information can be found in COMDTINST M1020.6E, Uniform Regulations , COMDINST M1000.1A

***Tattoos/Brands/
Scarring/Mutilation***

Tattoos, brands, intentional scarring or mutilation, or modifications of the head, neck, and hands are prohibited unless required for legitimate medical purposes. Any markings on the neck area may not show above any uniform shirt including the dark blue T-shirt. No tattoos or brands shall be visible below the wrist bone.

Prohibited are any markings of the body that:

- Are contrary to the published basic core values of the Coast Guard
 - Show political endorsement
 - Advocate or symbolize all types of discrimination, sexual images, supremacist or extremist groups, gangs, or drug use
 - Are prejudicial to good order and discipline
 - Are of a nature to bring discredit upon the service.
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***Excessive Tattooing/
Branding Body
Mutilation or
Modification***

Excessive tattooing or branding is defined as that which results in more than 25% of an exposed limb (arm/leg) being adorned, and is not authorized. The exposed area shall be regarded as the zone between the member's elbow and wrist or the knee and the ankle. A Complex tattoo (mural, serpentine, etc.) that dominates a given area shall be regarded as full coverage for the purpose of determining excessiveness, regardless of any un-tattooed area within the larger picture. Coverage shall be determined by visual approximation. The measuring of individual limbs is not intended or desired. In the case of branding no more than one brand, not to exceed 4"x4", may appear anywhere on the body.

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, ect.) are not authorized.

Body Piercing

No piercing shall be made through the ear, nose, tongue, chin, eyebrow, or any other body part that would be visible while in any uniform, with the exception of women wearing earrings. Guidance regarding the wearing of earrings by women can be found in Uniform Regulations, (COMDINST M1020.6 (series)). Those individuals with preexisting unauthorized piercing shall discontinue the use of those piercing to allow for eventual healing.

Other piercing concealed by the uniform (such as naval and nipples) are strongly discouraged due to the potential for infection and medical complications. Under no circumstances 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. 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. 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 piercing shall discontinue the use of those piercing to allow for eventual healing.
