



## GENERAL ORDER

### TATTOOS/BODY PIERCING

### GENERAL ORDER – 4B

**Implementation Date: October 6, 2006 (as GO 65)**

**Revokes: GO 65**

#### 4B.1 Introduction

The purpose of this General Order is to establish rules and regulations regarding tattoos, body piercing/ornamentation and body modification/mutilation. This order applies to all members of the agency.

#### 4B.2 Definitions

Inappropriate tattoo – A tattoo is considered inappropriate if it depicts, describes, or otherwise refers to sexual conduct, acts, or organs. No tattoo may depict drug usage, weapons, acts of violence, or sexual acts. Tattoos of human skeletal remains are allowed as long as they do not depict any acts of violence. Notwithstanding the foregoing, tattoos that contain logos or insignias of police or military forces that may contain weapons as part of the logo or insignia shall not be considered an inappropriate tattoo.

Offensive tattoo – A tattoo is considered offensive if it depicts, describes or refers to intolerance of, or discrimination against any race, color, preference, creed, religion, gender, national origin, or; it is commonly associated with any organization or group which advocates such intolerance or discrimination; or it brings discredit upon the agency or violates standards of decency or morality.

Tattoo - Includes any tattoo, scar, branding, mark, or other permanent or temporary body art or modification deliberately placed on the body for purposes of decoration, ornamentation, or adornment. The term tattoo shall not apply to medical procedures, i.e. - cosmetic eyeliner, lipstick, etc. It is highly encouraged that any member seeking to obtain a tattoo or modify a tattoo that would be in a visible location should present the proposed art work to their component Deputy Chief in order to ensure it will not be construed as inappropriate or offensive as defined by this policy. The Deputy Chief's ruling will be final.

#### 4B.3 Policy/Procedure

- A. Members who were employed prior to October 6, 2006 are exempt; however, any modifications to or additional visible tattoos must meet the requirements prescribed within this policy. In addition, members hired after this date that have tattoos on their legs, will be precluded from an assignment that requires shorts.
- B. Members shall not have tattoos or decals visible when: on duty or representing themselves as agency employees at work or charity related events, including training, after-hours events or in uniform at any time.

1. Tattoos on the upper arm of any member who has regular interaction with the public (including VIN Detectives) must be mostly covered by the standard short sleeve uniform shirt or appropriate plain clothes shirt. No part of the tattoo shall be below the elbow; otherwise the member must wear a long sleeve shirt.
  2. Visible tattoos on the lower arms must be completely covered by an approved long sleeve uniform shirt or long sleeve shirt for plain clothes assignments. Tattoos approaching the wrist must stop before reaching the head of the ulna bone.
  3. Members may not make any modifications to the uniform sleeves which allow for more surface area of a tattoo to become visible.
  4. Tattoos on the thigh area must be covered by approved shorts. No part of the tattoo may come below the upper knee area.
  5. Tattoos on the lower leg or ankle area are acceptable as long as they can be completely covered by a standard ankle length sock (an ankle sock cannot protrude higher than two inches above the bottom of the tibia bone).
  6. Any tattoo that violates any aspect of this section will result in the member having to wear long pants. Members who have visible tattoos on their lower legs (calves), will be precluded from an assignment that requires shorts.
- C.** Civilian members who have no routine interaction with the public as part of their job responsibilities may have visible tattoos as long as they are not excessive, offensive, or on the face, neck or head. The member's Division Deputy Chief shall determine if a tattoo is inappropriate or excessive and if the member will be required to keep it concealed.
- D.** Any member hired who displays visible tattoos as described in the previous section may be denied consideration for any other job or position within the Department based on the tattoo restrictions associated with the available position. If feasible, depending on the dress code/uniform of the available position and the location of the member's tattoo(s), the member may be permitted to cover their visible tattoo(s) to receive consideration.
- E.** All members shall be exempt from the requirements of section B when participating in Department sanctioned physical calisthenics type activities conducted at Department property (included the gun range).
- F.** Any member participating at any training or physical type activity which takes place at an off-site location, which has visible tattoos, must be in compliance with section B (Exception- The SWAT commander may exempt members from this section for certain off-site trainings).
- G.** Tattoos deemed inappropriate or offensive are strictly prohibited. No candidate will be hired with an inappropriate or offensive tattoo and any member who obtains an inappropriate or offensive tattoo after hire will be subject to discipline, up to termination. No member is permitted to have a visible tattoo on their neck, face, head, scalp, or hands (except for one simulated wedding ring tattoo).

- H. When deemed operationally necessary, the Chief of Police, or his designee, may grant permission to an officer in a special assignment to display an existing tattoo, brand, body art or intentional mutilation.
- I. Tattoos that are deemed medically necessary or common cosmetic tattoos such as permanent eyebrows, makeup, and skin discoloration repair are exempt from this policy provided they conform to the grooming requirements of General Order 4.
- J. Uniformed members shall not wear any item of ornamentation in their nose, eyebrow, tongue or any other location of their body that is visible during duty hours or any duty-related function, with the exception of up to two earrings per ear permitted for female personnel. Uniformed members may not wear earrings that dangle from the ear. Uniformed male members are prohibited from wearing any earrings while on duty, unless assigned to the VIN Unit.
- K. Non-uniformed male members may wear one pair of stud style earrings (one per ear) not to exceed 1/4 inch in diameter. Non-uniformed female members may wear more than one pair of earrings provided they do not interfere with their assigned equipment. Non-uniformed members may not wear any other item of ornamentation in their ears, nose, eyebrow, tongue, or other location of their body that is visible during duty hours or at any duty-related function.  
  
**Exception:** Non-uniformed members assigned to the Communications Unit whose assignment does not require public contact may wear one, stud-style nose ornament not to exceed 1/10 inch in diameter, one tongue barbell ornament in which the visible ball portion of the barbell does not to exceed 1/4 inch in diameter and one pair of ear gauges (one per ear) not to exceed a 1/2 inch in diameter provided the ornaments do not interfere with communication/enunciation or the operation of job related equipment. Non-uniformed members assigned to the Communications Unit who elect to wear policy compliant ear gauges must wear their ear gauge(s) at all times while in the public safety building. Displaying vacant, stretched ear lobes is prohibited.
- L. Any person hired who displays any of the body modifications stated within Paragraph K, above, may be prohibited from being considered for any other job or position based on the appearance/uniform rules associated with the available position, unless the modification has been removed and their body, if visibly affected is returned to its original condition.
- M. Intentional body mutilation, piercing, branding, or intentional scarring outside of the provisions of Paragraph K are prohibited. Examples of intentional mutilation include but are not limited to: split or forked tongues; abnormal shaping of the ears, eyes, nose or teeth, foreign objects inserted under the skin to create a design or pattern; enlarged or stretched out holes in the ears other than normal piercing and the ear gauges permitted in Paragraph K, above); and intentional branding/scarring that is visible.
- N. The use of gold, platinum, or other veneers or caps for the purposes of ornamentation is prohibited. Teeth, whether natural, capped, or veneer, will not be ornamented with designs, jewels, initials, etc.
- O. Contact lenses, if worn on duty, shall be in a natural eye color. Red, orange, silver and other unnaturally colored contact lenses, or colors when worn that create an unnatural eye color, and contact lenses with graphic designs of any kind are prohibited.

**APPROVED**

  
Clyde H. Parry  
Chief of Police