



PAMBANSANG PUNONGHIMPILAN TANOD BAYBAYIN NG PILIPINAS
(National Headquarters Philippine Coast Guard)
139 25th St., Port Area
1018 Manila

NHQ-PCG/CGIG-IAS

18 May 2024

CIRCULAR
NUMBER 12-24

GUIDELINES ON TATTOO OR ARTIFICIAL BODY MARKINGS

1. AUTHORITY

Republic Act No. 9993 (PCG Law of 2009) and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

2. REFERENCES

- A. Philippine Coast Guard Uniform Regulations Manual, Series of 2021
- B. NHQ-PCG/CGMED Circular No. 12-19 dated 13 November 2019 (PCG Regimental Rules on Medical Clearances)

3. PURPOSE

This Circular prescribes the guidelines on the prohibition of tattoos or artificial body markings (ABM) for Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) applicants, and the removal of unauthorized body markings as provided in this Circular for PCG uniformed personnel. This is to ensure a professional Coast Guard appearance and bearing to the public eye, while still allowing individual expression through authorized body art that is consistent with the existing PCG Uniform Regulations Manual.

4. DEFINITION OF TERMS

- A. **Applicant** - an individual applying to be a Commissioned Officer or Non-Officer of the PCG.
- B. **Artificial Body Markings (ABM)** - include tattoos which are temporary, brands and intentional scarring.
- C. **Medical Officers** – are physicians commissioned as PCG Officers authorized to conduct medical examination and evaluation.
- D. **PCG Personnel** – refers to Uniformed and Non-Uniformed Personnel (NUP) of the PCG.
- E. **PCG Uniforms** – include ceremonial uniforms, office uniforms, operational uniforms, athletic uniforms and other uniforms provided in the PCG Uniform Regulations Manual.
- F. **Tattoo** – a mark, figure, design or word through permanent insertion of in below the skin.

5. GUIDELINES

A. General Guidelines

1. Any form of tattoo or ABM, unless required for legitimate health aesthetic purposes, which are visible while wearing PCG uniforms, are PROHIBITED. The minimum prescribed uniform shall be the PCG Athletic uniform (short-sleeved athletic shirt and shorts) and the crew/V-neck shirt for the PCG GOA. Thus, the minimum covered area should be up until the forearm and the middle of the thighs. Likewise, when attending any Command activity, while wearing civilian attire, and/or Coast Guard/ military weddings, the tattoo should always be covered.
2. Any form of tattoo or ABM anywhere in the body which will fall under the following categories are STRICTLY PROHIBITED, even if under cover/ clothing:
 - a) contrary to the published basic core values of the Philippine Coast Guard;
 - b) political or commercial endorsement;
 - c) advocates or symbolizes all types of discrimination (gender, race, color, etc);
 - d) obscene, graphic or sexual images;
 - e) promote supremacist or extremist ideals;
 - f) ethnically or religiously discriminatory or offensive;
 - g) group/ gang affiliation;
 - h) suggests or promotes illegal drug use or alcoholism;
 - i) prejudicial to good order and discipline; or
 - j) brings dishonor or discredit to the PCG or government service.
3. PCG applicants and uniformed personnel due for promotion, commissioning/CAD, enlistment and re-enlistment shall be subject to visual screening by the medical officers of Coast Guard Medical Service for issuance of medical clearance. This also applies to the Lateral Entrants and Recalled to Active Uniformed Service (RAUS) personnel. In addition, Non-Officers due for re-enlistment shall be required to submit a notarized affidavit of undertaking. Meanwhile, the PCG NUP shall be covered by Civil Service Commission Rules and Regulations.
4. PCG personnel with tattoos visible when wearing PCG uniforms shall have them removed upon effectivity of this Circular. An initial medical assessment shall be conducted by a Medical Officer to determine if the tattoo removal procedure will cause complications to concerned personnel.
5. Tattoo removal should be the last resort in the implementation of this Circular. Adequate time and preparation must be given to subject personnel when undergoing tattoo removal procedures.
6. The CG Medical Service shall prepare and issue certification to PCG personnel who have taken initiatives for the removal of their tattoo marks.
7. Medical clearance to be issued to PCG personnel who are still undergoing tattoo removal procedures shall be interim only, and must submit themselves to medical examination of the PCG Medical Officer after (1) month, or as deemed necessary, to determine if the subject personnel is complying with the directives, and also to monitor for possible complications.

8. PCG Non-Officers whose re-enlistment are about to expire will be given consideration, provided that the Medical Officer of the Unit shall certify that such personnel have initiated efforts in removing their tattoo marks.
9. Administrative Officers shall, in coordination with the CG Medical Service, consolidate names of PCG personnel who have undergone tattoo removal.

B. Location

No tattoo or brand, of any type, is authorized on the head, face (including inside the mouth), neck or hands, except as described below. All tattoos shall be in good taste, and in compliance with the content restrictions as provided hereunder:

1. Head/Face. Permanent eyeliner 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. Eyeliner makeup must not be brightly colored.
2. Neck/Chest. The reference point for tattoos or brands on the neck or chest is the collar of a standard crew or V-neck t-shirt, and no tattoo or brand shall be visible above the collar.

C. Disqualifying Tattoos

1. Applicants for PCG Commissionship, Enlistment, Lateral Entry or Return to Active Uniformed Service (RAUS) with prohibited tattoos and tattoos that are visible when wearing the PCG uniform, shall not be permitted to join the PCG;
2. Notwithstanding the possession of technical skills needed by the Command, no commitments of acceptance shall be issued to PCG applicants with visible tattoos, even after their removal or alteration. This is to ensure a professional Coast Guard bearing and appearance to the public; and
3. PCG applicants with acceptable tattoos and which are covered, may be allowed to apply, as long as they can present a certification that said tattoo was acquired at least one (1) year prior to application.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Unit Commanders

1. Shall ensure the proper and strict implementation of this Circular.
2. Shall direct PCG personnel, under his/her Command, who have tattoos or artificial body markings which violate the above guidelines, to report to the Medical Officer for evaluation/ assessment.
3. Shall conduct and impose strict disciplinary actions against PCG personnel under his/her Command for failure to comply with his/her directive to report to medical for proper evaluation within five (5) days.



B. Coast Guard Medical Service

1. Shall ensure that all PCG Applicants for Commissionship, Enlistment, Lateral Entry or Recalled to Active Uniformed Service (RAUS) are properly screened and are free from any form of tattoos or artificial body markings (ABM) in any part of the body prior to entry in the PCG service; Provided, that if said applicants have any acceptable ABM/ tattoos, such shall be not visible while wearing the prescribed PCG Uniform, such as Athletic Uniform or white crew/V-neck shirt for GOA; Provided finally, that said ABM/ tattoo was acquired by the applicant at least one (1) year prior to application and shall be supported by a certification.
2. Shall ensure that PCG personnel for promotion, commissionship/CAD, enlistment and re-enlistment are properly screened for any form of tattoo or artificial body markings prior issuance of medical clearance. This also applies to Lateral Entrants and Recalled to Active Uniformed Service (RAUS).
3. Shall ensure that PCG personnel with visible tattoos will undergo proper medical assessment and evaluation for possible risk of complications of tattoo removal procedures prior to the conduct of said procedure.
4. Shall review this policy on a regular basis and recommend updates in line with present medical guidelines and practice.

7. PENAL CLAUSE

Any PCG Personnel who violates this Circular shall be subjected to disciplinary action as provided under NHQ-CGIAS Circular No. 13-19 (Revised Guidelines and Procedures on Disposition of Violations of Code of Conduct and Discipline for PCG Uniformed Personnel dated 18 November 2019).

8. EFFECTIVITY

This Circular shall take effect on 18 May 2024.

BY COMMAND OF COAST GUARD ADMIRAL GAVAN:

OFFICIAL:

HOSTILLO ARTURO E CORNELIO
CG RADM
Chief of Coast Guard Staff


JAYSIEBELL B FERRER
CG CDR
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