



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

NHQ-PCG/CGIG-IAS

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**CIRCULAR
NUMBER 24-25**

**GUIDELINES FOR ENGAGEMENT OF PCG UNIFORMED PERSONNEL TO
FRATERNAL/SORORAL ASSOCIATIONS AND/OR ACTIVITIES**

1. REFERENCE

- A. Republic Act No. 9993, entitled "Philippine Coast Guard Law of 2009" and its Implementing Rules and Regulations dated 27 July 2009;
- B. Article III, Bill of Rights, Section 8 of the 1987 Constitution;
- C. NHQ-PCG/CGIAS Circular No. 11-22, entitled "Coast Guard Inspector General and Internal Affairs Service Guidelines and Governing Procedures in the Performance of its Functions" dated 18 July 2022;
- D. NHQ-PCG/CGIAS Circular No. 13-19, entitled "Revised Guidelines and Procedures on Disposition of Violations of Code of Conduct and Discipline for PCG Uniformed Personnel" dated 18 November 2019;
- E. NHQ-PCG/CGIAS Circular No. 15-16, entitled "Code of Conduct and Discipline for PCG Uniformed Personnel" dated 30 August 2016; and
- F. Letter Directive entitled "Guidelines in Treating Offenses Committed by Military Personnel While Participating in Fraternal/Organizational Activities" dated 24 August 1995.

2. PURPOSE

This Circular shall establish guidelines for PCG uniformed personnel in matters relating to their engagement or participation with fraternal/sororal/social groups/organizations and/or activities.

3. SCOPE

This Circular shall apply to all PCG Uniformed personnel.

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4. DEFINITION OF TERMS

- A. **Fraternal/Sororal Association** – refers to any organized group, fraternity or sorority, whether incorporated or not, formed primarily for social, academic, professional or advocacy purposes, whose membership is based on voluntary affiliation and shared identity or values, and which operates independently from the Philippine Coast Guard.
- B. **Engagement** – refers to any form of participation, involvement or interaction by PCG uniformed personnel with fraternal or sororal associations, whether as a member, adviser, guest, sponsor or supporter, including attendance in meetings, activities or events organized by such groups. This definition shall cover both formal membership and informal association where such involvement may reasonably be perceived to affect impartiality, discipline or the performance of official duties.
- C. **Conflict of interest** – exists when a PCG uniformed personnel's personal, social or fraternal affiliations interfere or may reasonably appear to interfere, with the impartial performance of their official functions, duties and responsibilities. It includes situations where the interest of fraternity, sorority or its members may compromise the member's loyalty to the service or the integrity of official decision-making.
- D. **Professional Work Ethics** – refer to the set of moral principles and behavioral standards that govern the conduct of PCG personnel in the performance of their duties, emphasizing integrity, discipline, impartiality and accountability as mandated under RA No. 6713, the PCG Code of Conduct and related issuances.
- E. **Personal Relationship** – For the purpose of this Circular, personal relationship shall refer exclusively to relationships formed, developed and maintained within or because of membership in fraternal/sororal organizations.
- F. **PCG Resources** – For the purpose of this policy, resources shall refer, but not limited to, human resources, funds, facilities, vehicles, equipment, aircrafts and ships.
- G. **Social Groups** – refer to any group, society, brotherhood, sisterhood, whose members are focused on building fellowship or companionship by shared rituals, symbols or affiliations, and which promotes mutual assistance, solidarity or advocacy among its members. This shall include, but not limited to, fraternities, sororities, civic brotherhoods/sisterhoods and similar organizations that operate outside the formal structure of the Philippine Coast Guard.

5. POLICY STATEMENT

The PCG upholds the constitutional rights of its personnel to self-organization and to form or join lawful associations. Accordingly, PCG uniformed personnel shall not be prohibited from joining fraternal or sororal organizations and other legitimate social groups, provided that such membership or engagement:

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- A. Serves a lawful and constructive purpose, consistent with public order, morality, and the national interest;
- B. Does not conflict with or impair the performance of official duties, not undermine the discipline, loyalty, professionalism and impartiality required of all members of the Service;
- C. Does not create or appear to create a conflict of interest, favoritism or undue influence in the exercise of authority; and
- D. Does not interfere with the chain of command or operational integrity of the PCG.

Membership in any private organization shall always be secondary to the personnel's primary allegiance to the Service and the Republic. Every Coast Guard personnel is enjoined to uphold the highest standards of professional work ethics, placing the interests of public service above personal or fraternal affiliations.

6. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- A. One of the foundational concepts observed and practiced in the uniformed and armed service is that it is on its own, an association. This is mainly due to the nature of the job which is considered high risk and dangerous. Premium is placed on loyalty specially that the oath of the Service is to serve and protect the Flag, Constitution and Country. All others are considered to be subservient to this allegiance.
- B. Due to the nature of the job and to the degree of allegiance it requires, members of the uniformed and armed services are afforded very limited right to self-organization. Examples of allowed groups are academy/school alumni groups, rank-based groups (e.g officers' club, junior Enlisted Personnel group and the like), and/or government recognized professional organizations (e.g IBP, PICPA, PCAP, etc).
- C. Armed and uniformed services observe a strict hierarchical organizational structure where the different ranks have its clear authority, responsibility and accountability. The seniority in the Service should always be observed otherwise breakdown in discipline will occur.
- D. Uniformed services are distinct institutions with state duties, but that membership in external fraternities/sororities is not prohibited *per se* unless it conflicts with legal obligations. Under Article III, Section 8 of the 1987 Constitution, the people, including the personnel of the PCG, have the right to form or join associations, subject to limitations provided by law, public, order, discipline, mission or other state interest.

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- E. For members of other groups like fraternities/sororities that have their own hierarchy and traditions, practice of such within PCG service is frowned upon. Though for those who are already members even before joining the PCG, they are dissuaded from displaying or observing their group's hierarchy and traditions that can undermine those of the PCG Service.

7. SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

- A. Fraternal/sororal membership is not outrightly prohibited but its rules on hierarchy, tradition and practices should not be visibly used or practiced within PCG premises including spaces where an official PCG gathering or activity is conducted.
- B. It is prohibited that any personnel who belongs to a social group, fraternity, sorority and the like shall use such to lobby for position, promotion, favor or for the tampering of cases.
- C. Social group or fraternity/sorority practices, when done within PCG premises or places where an official function or event is being conducted is considered familiarization especially when performed by an Officer and an Enlisted Personnel, or between a senior and a junior.
- D. Membership in social groups or fraternity/sorority shall not result in actual or apparent familiarity, partiality, favoritism, unfairness and preferential treatment. More importantly, the same shall not be an excuse in not observing the hierarchy of ranks and the traditions of the Service especially the chain of command.
- E. The following are prohibited acts for all PCG uniformed personnel and/or PCG Units:
- i. Use of PCG official letterheads and/or logo for personal business;
 - ii. The use of government time, facilities, vehicles, funds, communication systems or any other government-owned or controlled assets for non-official activities, including fraternity or sorority-related events.
 - iii. PCG uniform shall be free of any pins/logos displaying social groups.
 - iv. No logos of any social group shall be displayed in any PCG offices, facilities, camps or any premises.
 - v. Use of languages unique for each social group should not be used in the presence of non-members.

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8. ADMINISTRATIVE SANCTIONS

If the acts of the concerned PCG personnel in violation of the provisions of this Circular are tantamount to any of the offenses enumerated under the Philippine Coast Guard Code of Conduct, the disposition of the said case shall be governed by NHQ-PCG/CGIAS Circular Number 13-19 dated 18 November 2019 (Revised Guidelines and Procedures on Disposition of Violations of Code of Conduct and Discipline for PCG Uniformed Personnel).

9. RESPONSIBILITIES

Commanding Officers of all PCG Units shall ensure the dissemination of this Circular within their area of responsibility. They shall likewise ensure conformity and strict observance by PCG uniformed personnel of the provisions of these Circular in accordance with the professional standards set forth under the Code of Conduct and Discipline for PCG uniformed personnel.

10. AMENDMENT

Any amendment or modification of this policy as may be necessary must be approved by the Commandant, PCG.

11. RESCISSION

Other policies that are inconsistent with this Circular are hereby rescinded upon approval by the Commandant.

12. EFFECTIVITY


This Circular shall be effective upon the approval of CPCG and its subsequent publication by the Coast Guard Adjutant.

After a period of two (2) years, this Circular may be reissued, amended or revised, unless otherwise a law on the contrary is issued.

BY COMMAND OF ADMIRAL GAVAN PCG:

OFFICIAL:

GLIDE GENE MARY G SONTILLANOSA
COMMO
Chief of Coast Guard Staff
PCG


JAYSIEBELL B FERRER
CDR **PCG**
Coast Guard Adjutant