

Tattoos, Brandings, and Scarifications

329.1 POLICY

It is the policy of this agency that tattoos or brands that are detrimental to good order are prohibited. Additionally, while on or off-duty in uniform or on-duty civilian attire, employees are prohibited from exhibiting tattoos, body art, or brands that are offensive or demeaning to persons of ordinary sensibilities. This policy may be rescinded or modified at any time by the Chief.

329.2 PURPOSE

Professionalism is the cornerstone of the Riverside County Probation Department, and is a major contributor to our reputation for excellence. The Department has a responsibility to ensure all on duty employees adhere to appropriate personal appearance standards to support this foundational value. A professional image encourages community confidence and promotes esprit de corps among the organization.

This policy establishes specific guidelines for the display of tattoos, brandings, and/or scarifications by members of this Department. It places accountability for compliance not only upon each employee, but also upon their supervisors and managers.

329.3 DEFINITIONS

Body modification: a deliberate altering of the human anatomy or human physical appearance.

Brand: a picture, design, or other marking that is burned into the skin or other areas of the body. Body markings are pictures, designs or other markings as a result of using means other than burning to permanently scar or mark the skin.

Extremist: extremist tattoos or brands are those affiliated with, depicting, or symbolizing extremist philosophies, organizations, or activities. Extremist philosophies, organizations, and activities are those which advocate hatred or intolerance based on race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, economic status, age, or disability; advocate, create, or engage in illegal discrimination based on race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, economic status, age or disability; or advocate violence or other unlawful means of depriving individuals rights infer the U.S. Constitution, and Federal or State law.

Indecent: indecent tattoos or brands are those that depict nudity or are offensive to modesty, decency, propriety, or professionalism.

Political: relating to the symbols, causes, ideas or strategies of a particular party or group in politics, including special interest groups.

Racist: racist tattoos or brands are those that advocate a philosophy that degrades or demeans a person or group of people based on race, ethnicity, or national origin.

Sexist: sexist tattoos or brands are those that advocate a philosophy that degrades or demeans a person or group of people based on gender.

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Tattoo/body art: a picture, design, or making made on the skin or other areas of the body by staining it with an indelible dye, or by any other methods including pictures, designs, or markings only detectable or visible under certain conditions (as in an ultraviolet light or invisible ink tattoo). The term tattoo and body art are interchangeable.

329.4 APPLICATION

329.4.1 PROHIBITED MARKINGS

The following tattoos, brands, or scarifications are prohibited, from being displayed:

- (a) Extremist
- (b) Indecent
- (c) Sexist
- (d) Racist

Any tattoo/body art or brand that implies a negative bias toward any group will cause the employee to be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. No group, office, shift, assignment, team, or other collection of employees, may display the same tattoo or marking if the theme message, content, or mere existence as a group tattoo or marking, is viewed by the Chief or his designee to be in conflict with our mission, professional image, or otherwise in violation with any other part of this policy. Employees are encouraged to consider the impact that such group tattoos may have upon their image, testimony in official proceedings, and upon our role as an unbiased law enforcement organization.

329.4.2 PROHIBITED LOCATIONS

All employees are prohibited from displaying tattoos on any part of the hands, neck, face, head, eyelids, mouth, and ears with the following exceptions:

- (a) Tattoo of a wedding band on the ring finger;
- (b) Permanent facial make-up on the eyebrows, eyeliner, and lips that is conservative.

329.4.3 CONCEALMENT

The Department reserves the right to require employees to conceal their tattoos/body art or brands if deemed necessary to comport with evolving standards. This policy and its exceptions do not grant permanent approval to display any tattoos/body art or brand subsequently deemed unacceptable for display, and employees may be required to cover them at any time.

The following tattoos/body art and brands must be concealed in accordance with this policy while on duty:

- (a) Symbols or markings likely to elicit a strong negative reaction in the workplace or public or that are inconsistent with the Department's values or community relations objectives including, but not limited to, symbols or markings that promote or are associated with violence or weaponry

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- (b) Anything contrary to the purpose of law enforcement including, but not limited to, depictions symbolizing or indicative of alcohol or narcotics, illegal or gang related activity, or symbols suggestive of activity that undermines the purpose of law enforcement.
- (c) Illustrations, references, symbols, acronyms or the like that denigrate the United States, State of California, or the Department.
- (d) Symbols or markings that represent political beliefs, political parties, political slogans, or that cast any political group in a negative light.

Concealment for areas not naturally covered by the uniform or plainclothes attire shall be accomplished with flesh-color matched bandages or wraps.

329.4.4 PIERCINGS AND MODIFICATIONS

Earrings must be consistent with safety precautions and considerations, and not be restrictive or inhibit the performance of one's duties. Appearance must not be so extreme that it detracts from a professional image. Regardless of gender, body piercing of the face, head, neck, nose, mouth, and hands is prohibited. For all employees, any visible piercing or alteration to any areas of the body that is distracting, inconsistent with a professional appearance, or which noticeably distorts normal anatomical features (i.e., that is not a reasonable elective cosmetic surgery performed by a licensed physician or medically required) is prohibited. Such prohibited body alterations include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Tongue splitting or bifurcation
- (b) Complete or transdermal implantation of any objects other than hair replacement or other reasonable elective cosmetic surgery performed by a licensed physician
- (c) Abnormal shaping of the ears, eyes, or nose
- (d) Outlandish or unnatural contact lens colors or color variations that detract from a professional appearance
- (e) Gauging or gradually increasing the radius of a surgically induced opening in the flesh in areas such as the earlobes or lips
- (f) Abnormal filling of the teeth
- (g) Dental jewelry or unnatural appearing covers such as "grills"
- (h) Extraocular implants

Procedures medically necessary because of illness, deformity, or injury (and performed by a licensed physician) shall not be considered body modifications for the purpose of this policy.

329.4.5 AUTHORIZATION FOR VISIBLE TATTOOS/BODY ART

- (a) Current employees are encouraged to submit designs for new tattoos to their Supervisor when there is doubt about compliance with this policy

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(b) The employee's manager shall make the final determination as to whether tattoo/body art conforms to this policy.

(c) Prospective employees shall include information on all tattoos/body art in their application packet to ensure none are prohibited by this policy.

1. The Human Resources Manager will make the final determination as to whether an applicant's tattoos/body art comply with this policy.

329.4.6 SPECIALIZED ASSIGNMENTS AND VISIBLE TATTOOS / BODY ART

(a) Employees working the following assignments are prohibited from displaying tattoos or body art:

1. Courtroom Assignments

(b) Department personnel appearing in court, in or out of uniform, shall not display any tattoos or body art during their presence in the courtroom or during testimony.

(c) The Chief or his designee may amend what specialized assignments are prohibited under this section.

329.5 EXEMPTIONS

Members who seek cultural or other exemptions to this policy that are protected by law should generally be accommodated (Government Code § 12926). A member with an exemption may be ineligible for an assignment if the individual accommodation presents a security or safety risk. The Chief Probation Officer should be advised any time a request for such an accommodation is denied or when a member with a cultural or other exemption is denied an assignment based on a safety or security risk.

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