



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

**NHQ-PCG/CGIG-IAS**

11 July 2022

**CIRCULAR  
NUMBER.....10-22**

**GUIDELINES ON TATTOO OR ARTIFICIAL BODY MARKINGS**

**I. AUTHORITY**

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

**II. REFERENCE**

- 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)

**III. PURPOSE**

This Circular shall prescribe guidelines on the prohibition and removal of any form of tattoo or artificial body markings involving all applicants and PCG personnel to ensure professional Coast Guard appearance to the public while also allowing individual expression through authorized body art that is consistent with the existing PCG Uniform Regulations Manual.

**IV. DEFINITION OF TERMS**

- A. **Applicant** - an individual applying to be a commissioned Officer or non-officer of the PCG.
- B. **Artificial Body Markings** - 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 uniform and other uniforms provided in the PCG Uniform Manual.

- F. **Tattoo** - a mark, figure, design, or word through permanent insertion of ink below the skin.

## V. GUIDELINES

### A. General Guidelines

- a. Any form of tattoo or artificial body markings, unless required for legitimate medical purposes, which are visible while wearing PCG uniforms are prohibited and that should include the Athletic uniform (sleeveless shirt and athletic shorts). Thus, the minimum covered area should be from the shoulders, and the middle of the thighs. Likewise, when attending command activity wearing civilian attires and Coast Guard weddings, the tattoo should be covered.
- b. Any form of tattoo or artificial markings anywhere on the body that are: contrary to the published basic core values of the Philippine Coast Guard; show political endorsement; advocate or symbolize all types of discrimination, obscene, contain sexual images; promote supremacist or extremist, ethnically or religiously discriminatory, group/gang affiliation, suggest illegal drug use; prejudicial to good order and discipline; or of a nature to bring discredit upon the PCG service are prohibited.
- c. PCG uniformed personnel for promotion, commissionship/CAD, re-enlistment, enlistment and applicants shall be subject to visual screening by the medical officers of Coast Guard Medical Service for issuance of medical clearance. This also applies to Lateral Entrants and Recalled to Active Uniformed Service (RAUS). In addition, re-enlistment for non-officer shall be required to submit a notarized affidavit of undertaking. Thus, the PCG NUP shall be covered by Civil Service Commission Rules and Regulations.
- d. PCG personnel who have existing tattoo marks which are visible shall be removed upon effectivity of this Circular. For PCG personnel with existing tattoos that are visible, an initial medical assessment must be conducted by a medical specialist, to determine if subject personnel will incur complications if allowed to undergo tattoo removal procedures.
- e. 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.
- f. The CGMED shall prepare and issue certification to PCG personnel who have taken initiatives for the removal of their tattoo marks.
- g. 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 one (1) month, or as necessary, to determine if subject

personnel is complying with the directives, and also to monitor for possible complications.

- h. PCG Non-officers whose reenlistment are about to expire will be given consideration provided that the Medical Officer of the Unit shall certify such unit personnel have initiated efforts in removing their tattoo marks.
- i. Administrative officers shall, in coordination with CGMED, 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 will be in good taste, and in compliance with the content restrictions as provided hereunder.

- a. 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.
- b. Neck/Chest. The reference point for tattoos or brands on the neck or chest is the collar of a standard crew neck t-shirt. No tattoo or brand may be visible above the collar of a standard crew or V-neck t-shirt.

## **C. Disqualifying Tattoos**

Applicants for Commissionship, Enlistment or appointment with prohibited tattoos and tattoos that are visible when wearing a PCG uniform must not be permitted to join PCG. Regardless that the applicant with visible tattoo is with the necessary technical skills and needed by the command, no commitment will be made suggesting that the removal or alteration of a tattoo or brand will ensure PCG acceptance. This is to ensure professional coast guard appearance to the public.

## **VI. 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 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 PCG applicants are properly screened and are FREE from any form of tattoos or artificial body markings in any part of the body prior entry into the PCG service.
- 2) Shall ensure that PCG personnel for promotion, commissioning/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.

**VII. PENAL CLAUSE**

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

**VIII. EFFECTIVITY**

This Circular shall take effect immediately upon approval.

**BY COMMAND OF COAST GUARD ADMIRAL ABU:**

OFFICIAL:

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

**TITO ALVIN G ANDAL**  
**CG COMMO**  
Chief of Coast Guard Staff