



Department of State Police

General Order

Effective Date: December 9, 2025	Number: GEN-01A
Subject: Tattoos and Body Modifications	

1. Policy.

Department members shall maintain a professional, neutral, and disciplined public appearance that promotes public confidence and operational effectiveness. Standards regarding tattoos and body modifications are established to ensure that members present an image consistent with the Department's mission, community trust expectations, and do not reasonably undermine neutrality, impartiality, officer safety, or otherwise impair the effectiveness of Department operations.

2. Definitions.

Body Modification: Any intentional, permanent or semi-permanent alteration of the body or skin that changes the natural appearance or structure of visible body areas, including, but not limited to, subdermal implants, ear stretching beyond standard piercing, tongue splitting, transdermal posts or anchors, or any similar procedure that creates an appearance not consistent with professional law-enforcement standards, and that are not primarily performed for documented medical, dental, or reconstructive purposes.

Extremist: Any tattoo, scarification, or branding that depicts, symbolizes, or is commonly recognized as advocating or supporting extremist ideologies, hate-based philosophies, or unlawful discrimination against any individual or group based on race, color, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, or national origin, or that advocates violence or the unlawful deprivation of civil or constitutional rights, including symbols reasonably determined by the Department, based on training, intelligence bulletins, or law-enforcement consensus, to be affiliated with or adopted by extremist or hate-based organizations.

Indecent: Any tattoo, scarification, or branding that depicts nudity, sexual conduct, vulgarity, or graphic content, or that a reasonable person would conclude is intended to be sexually explicit, profane, or degrading, and that would reasonably be expected to undermine public confidence, disrupt workplace professionalism, or impair the Department's public image.

Scarification: The intentional creation of permanent scars on the skin.

3. All Members and Employees.

Prohibited Content:

No sworn member or civilian employee shall have any tattoo, brand, scarification, or body modification, regardless of placement or visibility, that is extremist or indecent as defined in Section 2 or as otherwise determined to be prohibited by the Colonel / Superintendent.

Initial determinations under this section shall be made by the employee's Division Commander with the assistance of the Human Resources Section and, when appropriate, the Office of Professional Integrity and Accountability. The Colonel / Superintendent shall have the ultimate and final authority to make a determination under this section.

If a member is found to have any marking containing "Prohibited Content", regardless of when the marking was received, when it was discovered by the Department, or the marking's placement or visibility on the body, the Department may initiate disciplinary proceedings, up to and including termination.

Placement and Visibility:

No sworn member shall have any tattoo, brand, or scarification on:

- a. The face;
- b. The neck above an open standard uniform collar; or
- c. The hands (defined as the area from the wrist to the fingertips).

This prohibition does not apply to:

- a. A single permanent commitment band on a ring finger; or
- b. Permanent eyeliner, eyebrows, or lipstick that are conservative in color and consistent with GEN-01 Personal Appearance.

Sworn members are allowed to obtain tattoos that comply with this General Order.

4. Applicants for Sworn Appointment.

All applicants seeking sworn appointment to the Department shall be screened for compliance with this General Order. Applicants shall disclose all tattoos, brands, and scarifications that are visible in any authorized uniform or attire, as well as all tattoos, brands, and scarifications, regardless of placement or visibility, considered "Prohibited Content" as defined in Section 3.

No applicant shall be appointed to the State Police Academy prior to being deemed in compliance with this policy as it applies to sworn members.



5. Body Modifications and Piercings.

Body Modifications:

Body modifications that are visible while in any authorized uniform or attire are prohibited.

Dental Modifications:

The use of dental veneers, caps, or other dental appliances for the purpose of ornamentation while on duty is prohibited. Teeth, whether natural, capped, or veneered, shall not be ornamented with designs, jewels, initials, or similar embellishments while on duty.

Body Piercings:

Body piercing jewelry not concealed by any authorized uniform or attire while on duty is prohibited, except for earrings worn in compliance with GEN-01 Personal Appearance. The wearing of any facial jewelry, including but not limited to tongue, lip, nose, or brow piercings, by any sworn member while on duty is prohibited.

Undercover Exception: Members assigned to undercover duties may display otherwise prohibited piercings when specifically authorized in writing by their Division Commander for the duration of the assignment.

6. References.

- a. GEN-01 Personal Appearance;
- b. Rules and Regulations, Article 10; and
- c. MPAC 26.1.1.

Promulgated by:

Geoffrey D. Noble
Colonel / Superintendent

