



# Department of State Police

## General Order

Effective Date: <b>May 25, 2023</b>	Number: <b>GEN-01A</b>
Subject: <b>Tattoos and Body Modifications</b>	

### Policy

Pursuant to GEN-01 Personal Appearance, members shall present an image of the highest standard, order, and professionalism to the public.

Members of the Department shall maintain their personal appearance to the highest standards possible and in conformance with GEN-01 Personal Appearance.

### All Sworn Members

No sworn member of the Department shall have ANY tattoo, scarification or brand that is considered extremist.

Extremist tattoos, scarifications or brands are those affiliated with, depicting, and/or symbolizing extremist philosophies, organizations, or activities. Extremist philosophies, organizations, and activities are those which advocate racial, gender and/or ethnic hatred or intolerance; advocate, create, or engage in illegal discrimination based on race, color, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, or national origin; and/or advocate violence or other unlawful means of depriving individual rights under the U.S. Constitution, Federal, or State law.

For purposes of this policy, the above prohibition on extremist tattoos, scarifications or brands shall also include indecent, sexist and racist tattoos, scarifications or brands:

- Indecent tattoos, scarifications or brands are those that are grossly offensive to modesty, decency, or propriety; shock the moral sense because of their vulgar, filthy, or disgusting nature or tendency to incite lustful thought; or tend reasonably to corrupt morals or incite libidinous thoughts.
- Sexist tattoos, scarifications or brands are those that advocate a philosophy that degrades or demeans a person based on gender or gender identity, but that may not meet the same definition of "indecent."
- Racist tattoos, scarifications or brands are those that advocate a philosophy that degrades or demeans a person based on race, ethnicity, or national origin.

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No sworn member shall have a tattoo, scarification, or brand on his or her face, neck or hands (wrist to fingertips).

NOTE: This prohibition pertaining to face and hands does not apply to members who have:

- Permanent commitment band(s) on the hand(s); and/or
- Permanent eyeliner, eyebrows or lipstick, if the permanent color is conservative and compliments the complexion and uniform.

However, under no circumstances shall any sworn member be allowed to add ANY additional permanent markings to his or her face.

**Effective June 22, 2020, no sworn member shall add any additional tattoo, scarification or brand, regardless of size, normally visible while on-duty in ANY authorized uniform or attire.**

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**Applicants**

All applicants seeking sworn appointment to the Department shall be screened during applicant processing to assess compliance with this General Order.

If an applicant is found to be in violation of this General Order, then the applicant may, at his or her sole discretion, have the non-compliant tattoo, branding, or body art, or visible portion thereof, removed at his or her own expense. If an applicant expresses a willingness to remove a non-compliant tattoo, branding, or body art, his or her application for appointment will be suspended until the removal process is completed and re-evaluated for compliance. Removal of any markings will not per se absolve the applicant of being deemed as having such affiliation or adherence to said philosophies, organizations or activities that may be apparent in any phase of the selection process.

No applicant shall add any additional tattoo, scarification or brand, regardless of size, normally visible while on-duty in ANY authorized uniform or attire.

Prior to appointment to the Massachusetts State Police Training Academy, any applicant who has tattoos/body art/brands/scarifications, normally visible while on-duty in ANY authorized uniform or attire, shall submit to the Division of Administrative Services / Human Resources Section for inclusion in the applicant's personnel file:

- An SP 802A Applicant Identification and Reporting of Tattoos/Body Art/Brands/Scarifications

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The SP 802A must contain the following information:

- The date the tattoo/body art/brand/scarification was received;
- A description and photograph(s) of the respective tattoo/body art/brand/scarification; and
- The size and location of the tattoo/body art/brand/scarification on the member's body that is visible while wearing the Department uniform.

**Body**  
**Modifications**

Body modification to any area of the body that is visible while on-duty in ANY authorized uniform or attire is prohibited.

The use of gold, platinum or other dental veneers or caps for the purpose of ornamentation while on-duty is prohibited. Teeth, whether natural, capped, or veneer shall not be ornamented with designs, jewels, initials, etc.

Body piercing jewelry not concealed by any authorized uniform or approved attire while on-duty is prohibited with the exception of earrings worn in compliance with GEN-01 Personal Appearance.

- The wearing of any facial jewelry to include, but not limited to tongue piercings, lip piercings, nose piercings, brow piercings by any sworn member of the Department while on-duty is prohibited.

**Exception:** Members who are on undercover assignment may display facial or body piercings when authorized by their Division Commander.

References

GEN-01 Personal Appearance;  
Rules and Regulations, Article 10;  
SP802 Sworn Member Identification and Reporting of Not Previously Documented Tattoos/Body Art/Brands/Scarifications;  
SP 802A Applicant Identification and Reporting of Tattoos/Body Art/Brands/Scarifications;  
MPAC: 26.1.1.

Promulgated By: **John E. Mawn Jr., Colonel/Superintendent**