

The following is an excerpt from VSP-DIR-136, Tattoos and Body Modification, as relates to new members hired after Monday, July 1, 2019. The section in the full policy begins with 4.2(E) and continues through 4.2(F)(4):

A. Sworn members, hired after July 1, 2019

1. While on-duty, no sworn member, hired after July 1, 2019, shall have uncovered any tattoo or other body modification on a portion of the body that is visible while wearing the Class "C" summer uniform or ANY other authorized uniform or attire.
2. Any sworn member, hired after July 1, 2019, having such tattoo(s) or body modification(s) upon a visible portion of the body shall cover such mark(s) via the use of a flesh-tone or solid black covering(s) that shall be provided by the Department. Members performing an assignment requiring civilian attire may alternatively choose to conceal the tattoo or body modification in entirety with an article of civilian business attire. It shall not be necessary for a sworn member, hired after July 1, 2019, to cover a pre-existing commitment band on the ring finger.
 - a. Sworn members required to wear such coverings shall ensure the coverings remain clean, in good working condition, are free of any designs or logos, and are presentable to the public when worn.
 - b. Such covering(s) shall be subject to inspection by a supervisor to ensure compliance and satisfactory appearance.
 - c. With written authorization from the Troop/Unit Commander, so long as the functionality of the covering is not compromised in any manner, a sworn member may request a different size of the supplied covering. All coverings must continue to conceal all markings and must remain at least six (6) inches in length.
 - d. The coloring of a flesh-tone covering shall match closely the skin tone of the member wearing the covering.
3. The Commander of the Office of Professional Development, or designee, shall be responsible for scheduling a time to document via photograph all existing tattoos and/or body modifications to a part of the body visible in the Class "C" summer uniform or ANY other authorized uniform of any sworn member hired after July 1, 2019. This shall be accomplished prior to field assignment.
 - a. The photographs shall include:
 - i. The name of the member;

- ii. The date the photo was taken;
 - iii. A description of the tattoo(s) and/or body modification(s);
 - iv. The size and location on the member.
- b. The photographs and any related notations shall be documented as part of the member's Official Personnel File.

B. Applicants

1. As part of the application process, any individual seeking employment as a sworn member of the Department shall be screened to assess whether he or she is in compliance with this policy.
 - a. Applicants will be supplied the definitions established in this policy and be required to disclose in writing ALL tattoo(s), branding(s), scarification(s), body piercing(s) or other body modifications regardless of location on the body on the Personal Integrity Questionnaire.
2. If an applicant is found to be in violation of this policy, it will be explained that the applicant may, at his or her sole discretion, have the non-compliant tattoo(s), branding(s), scarification(s), or body art or visible portion thereof, removed at his or her own expense and to the satisfaction of the department.
3. Should an applicant express a willingness to remove a non-compliant tattoo(s), branding(s), scarification(s), or body art, his or her application will be placed on hold until the removal process is completed and a re-evaluation for policy compliance has occurred.
 - a. Any portion of the application process that is deemed to have expired while an application is on hold under this provision, shall again be satisfactorily completed by the applicant.
4. 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.

The following definitions are contained in the updated policy:

- 2.1 Tattoo means a permanent mark on the skin created by puncturing the skin and inserting pigment, dye, or other substance to establish a design, form, figure, or art.
- 2.2 Branding means the intentional burning of the skin to establish a design, form, figure, or art.
- 2.3 Scarification means the intentional cutting of the skin to establish a design, form, figure, or

art.

- 2.4 Gauging means gradually increasing the radius of an opening in the flesh in areas such as the ear lobes.
- 2.5 Body modification means but is not limited to; tongue splitting or bifurcation, the complete or trans-dermal implantation of any object(s) (other than hair replacement); abnormal shaping of the ears, eyes, nose; abnormal filing of the teeth; branding; scarification; or gauging.
 - A. The definition of body modification includes facial piercings to include, but not limited to, tongue piercings, lip piercings, nose piercings, and brow piercings.
 - B. Body modification shall not include those procedures which are medically necessitated by deformity or injury, or generally accepted changes/augmentations performed by a licensed medical professional.
- 2.6 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, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, 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, extremist shall also include indecent, sexist, or racist.
 - A. 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.
 - B. 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."
 - C. Racist tattoos, scarifications, or brands are those that advocate a philosophy that degrades or demeans a person based on race, ethnicity, or national origin.