



NEW CASTLE COUNTY POLICE

Tattoo and Body Modification Policy

DIRECTIVE 41

Appendix 41-U

(Revised SEPTEMBER 09, 2021)

NEW CASTLE COUNTY DIVISION OF POLICE

Tattoo and Body Modification Policy

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish personal appearance guidelines exceeding personal hygiene and grooming standards. The New Castle County Division of Police recognizes the personal appearance of its sworn personnel, when in public, has a direct impact on public confidence in, and the ability of individual personnel to perform their official duties. It is the policy of the New Castle County Division of Police that sworn members maintain a professional appearance that encourages public confidence in the members of this Division. As such, the following policy will apply to sworn members and applicants of the New Castle County Division of Police.

A. Definitions

Body modification: Refers to but is not limited to: tongue splitting or bifurcation, the complete or trans-dermal implantation of any object(s), abnormal shaping of the ears, eyes, nose, abnormal filing of the teeth, branding or scarification. Body modification should not include those procedures medically necessitated by deformity or injury, or generally accepted cosmetic changes or augmentations performed by a licensed medical professional.

II. Policy

A. Tattoos/Body Art/Branding:

Division of Police members may acquire new tattoos only after submitting a memorandum to the Chief of Police, which describes the location the desired tattoo will be placed, a rendition of the desired tattoo as well as its meaning. No tattoos shall be approved on the neck, face, head, fingers or hands. Tattoos, body art, piercings, or brands that are extremist, indecent, sexist, or racist are prohibited, regardless of location on the body. In addition, tattoos, body art, piercings, or brands that advocate or symbolize gang affiliation, drug use, supremacist, or extremist groups, are prohibited.

- a. 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 racial, gender, or ethnic hatred or intolerance; advocate, create, or engage in illegal discrimination based on race, color, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or national origin.
- b. Indecent tattoos or brands are those that are grossly offensive to modesty, decency, or propriety; morally shock the sense due to their vulgar or disgusting nature.
- c. Sexist tattoos or brands are those that advocate a philosophy that degrades or demeans a person based on gender.
- d. Racist tattoos or brands are those that advocate a philosophy that degrades a person based on race, ethnicity, or national origin.

B. Body Modification and Piercing:

Division of Police members shall acquire no visible body modifications, or piercings that are visible while on-duty in any authorized uniform or attire.

- a. Examples of such prohibited modifications or piercings include, but are not limited to:
 - 1. Forked tongues
 - 2. Foreign objects inserted under the skin to create a design or pattern
 - 3. Piercings and enlarged or stretched out holes in the nose, lips, mouth, scalp, ears, or face
 - 4. Intentional shaping of the ears or teeth
 - 5. Intentional scarring

C. Dental Ornamentation:

Division of Police members shall acquire no dental ornamentation. This policy in no way precludes members from utilizing clinically necessary devices for the purpose of aligning their jaws or teeth, or from having their teeth capped in such a way as the teeth appear normal.

- a. Examples of such dental ornamentation include:
 - 1. The use of metals or other veneers for the purpose of ornamentation of the teeth
 - 2. Natural, capped, or veneers providing ornamentation designs, jewels, or other markings/symbols on the teeth

D. Incumbent Personnel and Applicants:

Incumbent sworn agency personnel, serving at the time of the adoption of this policy, will report any current body modifications, branding, dental ornamentation, or body art that is visible in any approved uniform to their immediate supervisor within seven calendar days, via departmental memorandum after the adoption of this policy. The supervisor will be responsible for documenting any branding or body art that is in violation of this policy in the form of a departmental memorandum, and digital photographs. The acquired documentation and photographs will be maintained in the employee's official divisional personnel file which is secured within the Professional Development Unit office for future documentation and verification purposes as may become necessary.

Applicants applying for sworn employment with the division shall be screened during applicant processing at which time a determination shall be made as to whether an applicant is compliant this policy.

In the event an applicant is found to be non-compliant this policy, a review will be conducted by the Chief of Police or his/her designee to determine if the applicant will proceed through the hiring process. The potential applicant must agree to have all visible tattoos, branding or body art that are in violation of this policy, covered while on-duty or acting in any official capacity as a New Castle County Police Officer. The covering of branding or body art that violates of this policy shall be to the satisfaction of the Chief of Police or his/her designee. This agreement by the potential employee will be memorialized in the form of an official signed acknowledgement which will be maintained in the employee's official divisional personnel file. Any violation of this policy by an applicant may result in disqualification from the hiring process.

- E.** The Division reserves the right to modify Appendix 41-U to change the concealment requirements regarding visible tattoos and/or body modifications.