



POLICY AND PROCEDURE NO. 96

Tattoos and Body Modifications

Date Issued: October 6, 2022

Date Effective: October 6, 2022

2 Pages

1. PURPOSE:

The Worcester Police Department promotes professionalism in every aspect of the occupation. Personal appearance is a part of promoting professionalism and esprit de corps that allows the officer to be readily identifiable to the citizens we serve. This policy delineates what is allowed and what is prohibited.

2. DEFINITIONS:

Tattoo: A marking in the skin with indelible patterns, pictures, legends, etc., made by puncturing the skin and inserting pigments.

Temporary Tattoo: A marking on the skin with patterns, pictures, legends, etc. that is easily removed or fades over time. (e.g. henna, sticker tattoo)

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 teeth, branding or scarification.

The above definition includes facial piercings to include, but not limited to tongue piercings, lip piercings, nose piercings and brow piercings; the definition includes modifications of the ear tissue causing ear tissue to stretch to hold ornaments such as gauges, plugs, and tunnels.

Body modification shall not include those procedures medically necessitated by deformity or injury, or generally accepted cosmetic changes/augmentations performed by a licensed medical professional.

3. POLICY:

No sworn personnel shall have ANY tattoo, temporary tattoo (tattoo hereinafter shall mean both tattoo and temporary tattoo) or body modification that is considered extremist. Extremist tattoos or body modifications 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 or body modifications shall also include those that are indecent, sexist and racist:

Indecent tattoos or body modifications 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 or body modifications 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 or body modifications are those that advocate a philosophy that degrades or demeans a person based on race, ethnicity, or national origin.

No sworn personnel shall have ANY tattoo or body modification on their head, neck, or hands.

Exceptions:

Tattoos or body modifications on the head, neck, or hands acquired prior to Oct. 6, 2022 that are not in violation of Section 3 Subsection A of this policy. These tattoos or body modifications will be photographed and logged by personnel in the Bureau of Professional Standards and placed in the officer’s personnel file within 45 days of the effective date of this original policy.

Tattoos of eyebrows due to loss of eyebrow hair from medical/health reasons. (Eyebrow tattoos must be a pigment that replicates a natural hair color that is conservative and compliments the complexion and uniform.)

Sworn personnel who are working in an undercover capacity may wear piercings and temporary tattoos approved by their commander.

Ear piercing made to hold earrings that are worn by placing ornaments such as studded earrings into the piercing.

Note: Stud earrings may be worn and may be screw-on, clip on, or post-type. The earring will not exceed 3 mm or 1/8 inch in diameter. They must be unadorned (plain), spherical (round), or square (e.g. princess cut). When worn, the earrings will fit snugly against the earlobe. Hoop, two-sided, or drop earrings are not authorized. Officers may wear earrings only as a matched pair, with only one earring per standard lobe. Earrings are authorized to be worn ONLY in the lobe (lobule) of the ear, other parts of the ear are NOT AUTHORIZED. Earrings are not authorized in the nose, tongue, or eyebrows.

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

New Tattoos

Sworn personnel that wish to obtain a new tattoo that may violate policy should seek guidance from their commander.

Per:

Steven M. Sargent
Chief of Police