



Navy Spells Out Policy On Tattoos, Body Art, Piercings

Chief of Naval Personnel released a message clarifying the Navy's regulations regarding tattoos, body art and/or mutilations and dental ornamentation.

Navy policy stipulates that any tattoo/body art/brand that is obscene, sexually explicit or advocates discrimination of any sort is prohibited. Administrative separation could result for personnel disregarding this guidance.

Four criteria have been issued to commanders to assist them in determining whether a tattoo, body art or brand should be permitted: content, location, size and whether the item is required for cosmetic purposes.

Tattoos/body art/brands cannot be visible through the white uniform and cannot be on the head, face, neck or scalp regions. Items on the lower arm can be no larger than the wearer's hand, fingers closed.

The message also points out Navy policy restricting intentional mutilation, defined as radical alteration of the body, head, face or skin for the purpose of an abnormal appearance.

Dental ornamentation - the use of gold, platinum or other veneers or caps for decorative purposes is also prohibited.

Local commanders will consider waivers for pre-existing conditions on a case-by-case basis. They have discretion to determine whether removal is required, but items may be waived if they are not prejudicial to good order, discipline and morale.

Even if body art/tattoos/branding/mutilation occurred prior to the Navy's original guidance released in January 2003, commanders still have the option to recommend separation if medical authorities determine removal is not feasible.

Amplification on this policy, waiver applications and waiver eligibility can be found in NAVADMIN 110/06.

