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Sheriff

HARFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE PERSONNEL POLICY

Body Modifications

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1. Purpose

To establish standards for acceptable and unacceptable body modifications applicable to all employees.

2. Policy

Deputies and civilian employees will present themselves in a manner that complies with this policy.

3. Definitions

BODY ART: Shall include the following: tongue splitting or bifurcation, complete or trans-dermal implantation of any objects other than hair replacement, abnormal shaping of ears, eyes or nose, unnatural contact lens colors or color variations that detract from a professional appearance, gauging, branding or abnormal filing of teeth.

BRANDING: Intentionally burning the skin to create a design, form, figure or art.

EXTREMIST TATTOOS AND BODY ART: Any tattoo or body art affiliated with, depicting or symbolizing extremist's philosophies, organizations or activities. Extremist philosophies, organizations and activities are those which can be interpreted to advocate, promote and support hatred and/or violence towards any person or group of persons based on race, national origin, gender, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation.

GAUGING: Gradually increasing the radius of an opening in the flesh in areas such as the ear lobes.

INDECENT TATTOOS OR BODY ART: Any tattoo or body art that can be interpreted as grossly indecent, lewd or sexual that shocks the moral sense because of their crude, vulgar, filthy or disgusting nature or would be inappropriate to be viewed by any minor child.

OFFENSIVE TATTOOS AND BODY ART: Any tattoo or body art depicting words, pictures or symbols which can be interpreted to advocate, promote or support racial, gender or ethnic hatred or intolerance. This shall also include any tattoos or body art that can be interpreted to advocate, promote or support discrimination towards any race, national origin, gender, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation.

RACIST TATTOOS OR BODY ART: Any tattoos or body art that can be interpreted to advocate, promote or support degrading, demeaning or insulting to any person or group of persons based on race, ethnicity or nation origin.

SCARIFICATION: Intentionally cutting the skin to create a design, form, figure or art.

SEXIST TATTOO OR BODY ART: Any tattoos or body art that can be interpreted to advocate, promote or support degrading, demeaning or insulting any person or persons based upon gender, but that may not meet the same definition of "Indecent Tattoos or Body Art".

TATTOO: Permanent mark on the skin made by puncturing the skin and inserting pigment.

4. Procedures

A. Body Modifications

1. Body modifications that are medically necessary due to deformity or injury are not covered by this policy.
2. Body modifications covered by this policy include:
 - a. tattoos;
 - b. body art;
 - c. tongue splitting or bifurcation;
 - d. abnormal shaping of the ears, eyes or nose;
 - e. abnormal filing of the teeth;
 - f. branding or scarification;
 - g. trans-dermal implantation of any object (other than hair replacement); and
 - h. gauging.
3. Prohibited body modifications include, but are not limited to:
 - a. tattoos or body art depicting extremist philosophies, organizations, or activities: those that advocate racial, gender, or ethnic hatred or intolerance; advocate, create, or engage in illegal discrimination based on race, color, gender, ethnicity, religion, or national origin, or advocate violence or other unlawful means of depriving individual rights under the U.S. Constitution and federal or state law;
 - b. tattoos or body art that are grossly offensive to modesty, decency, or propriety;
 - c. tattoos or body art that advocate a philosophy that degrades or demeans a person based on gender, race, ethnicity or national origin;
 - d. symbols likely to incite a strong reaction in the workplace (e.g., swastikas)
 - e. tattoos or body art of names, initials, symbols, acronyms or numbers that represent criminal or historically-oppressive organizations or street or prison gangs [e.g., Aryan Brotherhood ("AB"), Ku

Klux Klan (“KKK”), the Nazi Party or Third Reich, Black Guerilla Family (“BGF”), Mexican Mafia (“MM”), Hells Angels (“HA”), Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13)];

- f. tattoos or body art depicting illegal drugs or names, symbols, acronyms, or numbers related to illegal drugs;
- g. tattoos or body art that a reasonable person would find offensive;
- h. body modifications of the head, scalp, face, neck and hands: head, scalp, face and neck areas include the visible skin while wearing a collared uniform shirt with an unbuttoned top button; hands will include area from wrist to finger tips; and
- i. teeth, whether natural, capped or veneers, that are ornamented with designs, jewels, etc.

B. Exceptions

- 1. Micropigmentation, derma pigmentation or cosmetic tattooing of the lips, eyebrows or eyelashes is permitted as is restorative tattooing that is subdued and moderate in tone and application.
- 2. A tattoo or brand in the form of a ring is permissible on the wearer’s finger (not thumb) with the limitation of one per hand. The tattoo(s) will not exceed ¼” width; will be in good taste and in compliance with the content restrictions of this policy.

C. Deputy/Uniformed Civilian Applicants

- 1. Applicants will be screened to ensure compliance with this policy.
- 2. Applicants will be informed that, if hired, they will be required to comply with this policy.
- 3. If an applicant is denied employment based on prohibited body modifications, a picture of the body modification will be taken and placed in the applicant's file whenever possible.

D. Violations

- 1. Failure to comply with this policy will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination.