



Body Art/Tattoo Policy

Section: Uniforms and Personal Appearance

Personnel Affected: All Personnel

References:

[GO 208.02 – Investigation of Misconduct](#)
[GO 208.03 – Disciplinary Guidelines for Substantiated Misconduct](#)
[GO 209.01 – Personal Grooming](#)
[GO 209.02 – Uniform Regulations](#)
[City of Charlotte Policy HR5 – Harassment-Free Workplace](#)

Forms:

September 15, 2020

Reginald T. Johnson, Fire Chief

Effective Date

I. PURPOSE

This General Order shall establish a policy concerning body art/tattoos for Charlotte Fire Department (CFD) personnel.

II. DISCUSSION

This policy is necessary to ensure that the appearance of CFD personnel is consistently professional and builds community trust. The department must be in a position to serve any citizen requiring our service. To render that service, we must ensure that there is nothing offensive or inappropriate on any employee's person visible to the general public.

III. TATTOO REGULATIONS

A. Areas where NO visible tattoos will be permissible:

1. Above the shirt collar to include the neck, face or anywhere on the head.
2. Below the wrist to include the entire hand (a single tattoo on the ring finger is acceptable).
3. Employees with tattoos in violation of this requirement will be appropriately documented and the immediate supervisor shall follow directives in *Section D* of this document.

B. Permissible visible tattoos include:

1. Any visible tattoo that is below the short-sleeve line or below the issued gym shorts or blue shorts and does not undermine the department's standards on inclusivity and Human Resources (HR) *Harassment Policy – HR 5*. This includes any verbiage or symbols deemed vulgar, profane, drug-related, gang-related or sexually explicit.
2. Any member with a visible tattoo permissible as defined above will be permitted to wear short-sleeves as well as gym shorts or blue shorts per *GO 209.02 - Uniform Regulations*.

- C. If a tattoo is visible and considered to undermine the department's standards on inclusivity and Human Resources *Harassment Policy – HR 5*, as described above and/or if an employee has a tattoo placed in a non-permissible area, the immediate supervisor of the employee shall be notified.
- D. The immediate supervisor shall:
1. Notify the next step in the chain of command
 2. Notify the employee of the allegation, follow *GO 208.02 - Investigation of Misconduct*, as appropriate.
 3. Initiate the investigation of misconduct and documentation shall include reviewing the employee's tattoo(s).
 4. **Once the investigation has been completed, all appropriate documentation shall be passed up through the chain of command to the appropriate deputy chief.**
 5. The employee shall cover questionable tattoo(s) until the investigation is completed. This will be accomplished by either a fire department issued long-sleeve shirt and/or blue pants or other approved method.
 6. The employee's chain of command, command staff, City HR, and City Attorney's Office will conduct a review.
 7. Once a final determination is made, the employee and the chain of command will be notified of the outcome and any required actions to include following *GO 208.03 – Disciplinary Guidelines for Substantiated Misconduct*. In addition, the outcome will be included in the employee's personnel file.
 8. Any member with a visible tattoo determined not to be permissible shall wear issued blue uniform pants and long-sleeve uniform shirts per *GO 209.02 - Uniform Regulations* when on duty or other approved method.