



OFFICIAL: Sensitive

GENERAL ORDER DRESS STANDARDS

General Order title	Dress standards
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Review date	June 2024
Review responsibility	Physical Assets Services Branch
Replaces	Previous General Order, Dress standards
PCO reference	2015/1830-04
Gazette reference	SAPG 41/23
Enquiries to	Contracts Support Officer Telephone 732 23532
Corporate Policy Sponsor	Executive Director, Business Service

General Orders provide an employee with instructions to ensure organisational standards are maintained consistent with SAPOL's vision. To this end, General Orders are issued to assist an employee to effectively and efficiently perform their duties. It is important that an employee constantly bears in mind that the extent of their compliance with General Orders may have legal consequences.

Most orders, as is indicated by the form in which they are expressed, are mandatory and must be followed. However, not all situations encountered by an employee can be managed without some form of guidance and so some of these orders are prepared as guidelines, which should be applied using reason. An appendix to a General Order will be regarded as part of the General Order to which it relates. At all times an employee is expected to act ethically and with integrity and to be in a position to explain their actions. Deviation from these orders without justification may attract disciplinary action.

To ensure best practice an employee should be conversant with the contents of General Orders.

The contents of General Orders must not be divulged to any person not officially connected with SAPOL. Requests for General Orders will be managed as follows:

- Civil subpoena and disclosure requests—contact the Information Release Unit.
- Criminal subpoena and disclosure requests—refer to General Order, **Disclosure compliance and subpoena management**.
- Freedom of information requests—contact the Freedom of Information Unit.
- Any other requests (including requests by employees)—refer to instructions provided within General Order, **Corporate policy framework, 5. GENERAL ORDER REQUESTS/RELEASE**.

Out of Scope



15. TATTOOS/BODY ART, BODY MODIFICATIONS OR BODY PIERCINGS

In line with SAPOL's professionalism and values, an employee may have visible, non-offensive tattoos including a full 'sleeve' style on their arms. This however, does not include tattoos which are on the ears, face, head, scalp, or front or sides of the neck.

For clarity, tattoos on the rear of the neck may be permitted but must not extend forward of the neck beyond an imaginary line drawn down vertically to the shoulder behind the back of the ear.

When an individual employee, supervisor or manager is uncertain as to the appropriateness of the tattoos worn by current serving members they will need to seek guidance from the Dress Standards Committee (DSC) who could provide an exemption if deemed necessary.

For employees considering obtaining new visible tattoos; and they are uncertain whether the new tattoos comply with this General Order, it is necessary to provide a **PD584 Application for review of the visible tattoo/body art or body modifications (PD584)** prior to committing to the process.

For further enquiries in relation to tattoos and body art contact People, Culture and Wellbeing Executive.

Body modifications

Employees are to maintain a professional appearance and therefore must not undertake any visible body modification not directly associated with a health or medical need.

A body modification procedure includes, but is not limited to:

- scleral tattooing
- body branding
- object implantation
- earlobe or neck stretching
- body scarification
- tongue splitting.

These modifications do not maintain the professional appearance standards expected of a SAPOL employee and can be a risk to an employee's health and safety.

Any employee who undertakes such modifications will be required to reverse the procedure at their own expense.

Where an employee considers such body modifications are necessary for religious or cultural reasons, an exemption must first be sought from the DSC.

For further enquiries in relation to body modifications contact People, Culture and Wellbeing Executive.

Body piercings

Other than singular stud earrings in the ear (refer to **10. NON-UNIFORM ITEMS, Jewellery** previous in this General Order), no employee shall wear any visible body piercing (including transparent piercings) which could impact upon professional brand and image; their personal safety; and the potential to cause risk for operational safety.

Dress Standards Committee

The DSC has been established to ensure a fair and consistent standard (relative to tattoos/body art, body modifications and body piercings) is applied.

The DSC is responsible for determining whether an exemption should be granted to an applicant regarding their visible tattoo(s)/body art, body modification or body piercings outside the requirements of this General Order. In making the determination, the DSC will consider (but not be limited by) the following:

- the size, location and nature of the visible tattoo(s)/body art, body modification or body piercing
- whether the visible tattoo(s)/body art or body modification is a requirement of a person's religion, race or culture
- whether the employee is undertaking duties in a specialist covert area—where this is the case, an exemption will only be applicable for the period of the duties.

Permanent members of the DSC are the Executive Director, People, Culture and Wellbeing Service (or delegate) as chair; Assistant Commissioner, Governance and Capability Service (or delegate); Director, Organisational Development Branch; and the Manager, Talent Acquisition Section (or delegate).

Additional members of the DSC include an Officer of Police; a District/LSA/branch manager; and a workplace representative. These additional members will serve on the DSC for an extended period and will be replaced by one of their peers in a staggered process to ensure the committee is able to apply a consistent and fair approach to decision-making.

Responsibility for compliance

The District/LSA/branch/group manager is responsible for ensuring no employee has a visible tattoo(s) body art, body modification or body piercings whilst performing duties, unless it complies with the requirements of this General Order or a formal exemption has been granted by the DSC.

An employee who has a visible tattoo(s)/body art, body modification or body piercing is responsible for ensuring they comply with this General Order.

Applying for an exemption

An employee must complete a **PD584**.

Colour photographs of the visible tattoo(s)/body art, body modification or body piercing must accompany the **PD584**. It is important the photographs are of sufficient quality to enable the DSC to appreciate the size, location and nature of the visible tattoo(s)/body art or body modification. A close up view of the tattoo(s)/body art, body modification or body piercing and a full body photograph of the employee wearing work attire must be provided.

Any application that is accompanied by non-colour or poor quality photographs will be returned to the employee for resubmission.

Where a visible tattoo(s)/body art or body modification contain dialogue or diagrams that are in a foreign language or alphabet the employee must provide an independent translation with the **PD584**. The DSC will recognise translations provided by:

- the Government of South Australia Interpreting and Translating Centre
- a translator approved by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters Limited.

An employee applying for an exemption for any visible tattoo(s)/body art, body modification or body piercings on religious, racial or cultural grounds is required to produce supporting evidence for consideration by the DSC.

Application for exemption process

The process when applying for an exemption is as follows:

- the completed **PD584**, colour photographs and any other supporting documents must be submitted to the employee's District/LSA/branch/group manager for their recommendation
- upon endorsement, the **PD584**, photographs and any supporting documents will be scanned (where necessary in colour) and saved as PDF documents
- the scanned documents and photographs are to be emailed to the DSC at <SAPOL:Dress Standards Committee>.

Where the employee applying for exemption does not have access to a scanner at their workplace the endorsed **PD584** and accompanying photographs/documents may be submitted in hard copy.

The **PD584** is to be submitted as a stand-alone document (not in a PCO file) with a covering **PD128 Forwarding minute** to the person nominated on the **PD584** at People, Culture and Wellbeing Executive, postcode 224.

When the application for exemption of tattoo(s)/body art, body modification or body piercing is received the application, photographs and all relevant documentation will be attached electronically to a TRIM file created for this purpose. People, Culture and Wellbeing Executive will facilitate the creation of the TRIM file and undertake the uploading of all electronic attachments.

Applicant for employment with visible tattoo(s)/body art, body modification or body piercing

Applicants for police officer, community constable, PSO, Traffic Camera Section and Public Sector Act positions will be advised of SAPOL's policy on visible tattoo(s)/body art, body modifications and body piercings through the application for employment process.

An applicant who has visible tattoo(s)/body art, body modifications or body piercings will not be precluded from having their application advanced.

Talent Acquisition Section employees; or other employees involved in the selection process, will make an initial assessment as to whether an applicant's tattoo(s)/body art, body modification or body piercings will be visible when on duty outside the accepted requirements of this General Order.

Where this is the case, they will inform the applicant of SAPOL's current policy for wearing visible tattoo(s)/body art, body modification or body piercings. All applicants must be made aware that where they are employed by SAPOL they will be required to comply with that policy otherwise this will result in disciplinary action. Applicants should also be informed of the exemption process, but applicants should not hold out any view on whether an exemption would be granted.

In principle exemption prior to obtaining visible tattoo(s)/body art or body modification

When an employee wishes to seek advice about an exemption prior to obtaining a visible tattoo(s)/body art, body modification or body piercings outside the requirements of this General Order, they can submit a **PD584** accompanied by a sketch/photograph of the proposed tattoo(s)/body art or body modification to the DSC at <SAPOL:Dress Standards Committee> through their District/LSA/branch/group manager. The District/LSA/branch/group manager will provide a recommendation to the DSC.

The DSC will advise the District/LSA/branch/group manager whether in principle exemption has been granted. When an in principle exemption is granted the District/LSA/branch/group manager must honour that decision, provided the documentation submitted is an accurate reflection of the actual final product. Where this is the case, a subsequent application for exemption is not required.

When the DSC grants an in principle exemption; and the employee obtains a tattoo(s)/body art, body modification or body piercing that differs in any way from the item described, that exemption will be considered invalid and the manager is responsible for notifying the DSC. The employee must immediately cover the visible tattoo(s)/body art while on duty and a fresh application for exemption will need to be submitted.

Determination of applications for exemption

When the DSC meets, a determination will be made regarding an employee's tattoo(s)/body art or body modification application.

Successful application for exemption

Where an application for exemption is successful:

- a letter advising of the outcome will be sent directly to the employee, with a copy also sent to their District/LSA/branch/group manager
- a copy of the signed letter will be attached electronically to the employee's TRIM file by People, Culture and Wellbeing Executive (prior to being sent out).

Declined application for exemption

Where an application for exemption is declined:

- a letter advising of the outcome will be sent directly to the manager
- a copy of the signed letter will be attached electronically to the employee's TRIM file by People, Culture and Wellbeing Executive (prior to being sent out)
- the District/LSA/branch/group manager will, as soon as is practicable, provide formal advice to the employee to cover up the visible tattoo(s)/body art or cover up, or otherwise manage, the body modification while on duty by issuing an administrative order—the administrative order will be signed by the employee and the manager
- the signed administrative order will be scanned and saved as a PDF document and emailed to <SAPOL:Dress Standards Committee>— People, Culture and Wellbeing Executive will electronically attach the scanned copy of the administrative order to the employee's TRIM file
- the District/LSA/branch/group manager will ensure a copy of the signed administrative order is provided to Ethical and Professional Standards Branch.

For further enquiries in relation to administrative order templates contact People, Culture and Wellbeing Executive.

Review

An employee aggrieved by a decision of the DSC may seek a review of that decision through the administrative grievance process. Refer to General Order, **Grievance management—administrative decision**.