

PROCEDURAL GUIDANCE MESSAGE

Name and Grade of Action Officer MSgt John Gereaux				Office Symbol RSOPA		Series Number 107		Signature of Action Officer			Implementation Date:
	To	Action	Initials/Date		To	Action	Initials/Date		To	Action	Initials/Date
1	RSOP/ CCU	Coord	RSOP _____ CCU _____	5				9			
2	JA	Coord	JA _____	6				10			
3	RSO/ CCU	APPR	RSO _____ CCU _____	7				11			
4	RSOPA	X-MIT	_____	8				12			

FROM: HQ AFRS/RSO

SUBJECT: Tattoo/Brands/Body Marking and Body Modification Policy Guidance

TO: All Recruiting Personnel

1. **This PGM supersedes PGM 103**

2. This guidance is designed to assist you in determining acceptability of applicants with tattoos/brands/body markings or body modifications. It incorporates the most recent Air Force policy guidance, as outlined in AFI 36-2903, 29 September 2002.

3. This is the Air Force policy on unacceptable tattoos/brands per AFI 36-2903, table 2.5:

a. **“Unauthorized (content):** Tattoos/Brands anywhere on the body that are obscene, advocate sexual, racial, ethnic, or religious discrimination are prohibited in and out of uniform. Tattoos/brands that are prejudicial to good order and discipline, or that are of a nature that tends to bring discredit upon the Air Force are prohibited in and out of uniform.”

b. **“Inappropriate (military image):** “Excessive tattoos/brands will not be exposed or visible (includes visible through the uniform) while in uniform. Excessive is defined as any tattoo/brands that exceed ¼ of the exposed body part and those above the collarbone and readily visible when wearing an open collar uniform. Members should not be allowed to display excessive tattoos that would detract from an appropriate professional image while in uniform.” Commanders should use these guidelines in determining appropriate military image and acceptability of tattoos displayed by **future** members in uniform.”

4. What is considered an exposed body part? **Arms** (Males/Females): Approximately one inch above the elbow to the fingertips (with fingers extended). **Legs** (Females): Top of the kneecap to just below the ankle. If the authorized tattoo(s) covers more than 1/4 (25%) of the entire exposed body part or if it detracts from an appropriate professional image while in uniform, the applicant is not qualified to enter the AF.

5. There are no provisions to allow an applicant with disqualifying body markings to process or ship on the condition that the markings will be removed once on active duty.

6. This is the Air Force policy on unacceptable body modifications as described in AFI 39-2903, table 2.5, note 3:

a. Applicants who intentionally alter or modify any part of their bodies in order to achieve a visible, physical effect that **disfigures, deforms or otherwise detracts from a professional military image** are disqualified from joining the Air Force. Examples of prohibited body modifications include (but are not limited to) tongue splitting or forking, tooth filing, residual piercing holes to include “gauging” (large enough to where you can see day light), and disfiguring skin implants.

7. MEPS Liaisons must review physicals closely for Medical Section comments mentioning tattoos/ brands/markings, piercings, and/or body modifications. Liaisons must also question applicants about tattoos/brands/markings, piercings, and/or body modifications during their interview/job counseling and also on ship day. When tattoos/brands/markings are likely to be seen in uniform, Liaisons must view and evaluate them using this PGM’s criteria. Liaisons must also view potentially unauthorized tattoos/ brands/markings (See paragraph 2a of this PGM) even if they will not be seen in uniform, using the guidance in this PGM. **CAUTION:** A Liaison of the opposite gender **will not** view tattoos/brands/ markings that are in the “undergarment area. ” When necessary, ask MEPCOM personnel or a sister-service liaison (same gender as applicant) to assist you. (EX: You have an all male Liaison staff and a female applicant has a questionable tattoos/brands/markings in an “undergarment area”, you must request that a female MEPCOM member or sister-service liaison view the tattoos/brands/markings and then describe them to you).

8. Finally, all **applicants should be briefed at the MEPS and by their recruiter** that once they are qualified, additional tattoos/brands/markings or body modifications may render them unqualified for service. Recruiters should encourage their applicants awaiting shipping not to risk the serious infection or disqualification that could result from inappropriate tattoos/brands/markings or body modifications. Attached are samples of disqualifying tattoos and body modifications.

9. Use this guidance along with AFI/AETCI 36-2002 to make determinations; however, in questionable cases, Recruiters/Liaison are encouraged to forward photos through your chain of command. Squadron and Group leadership should be given an opportunity to make the decision on questionable tattoos/ brands/markings and/or body modifications before forwarding to HQ AFRS/RSOPA. Reviews and decisions must be documented in AFRISS.

FOR THE COMMANDER

// Signed //

DWAYNE HAFER, Colonel, USAF
Chief, Operations Division

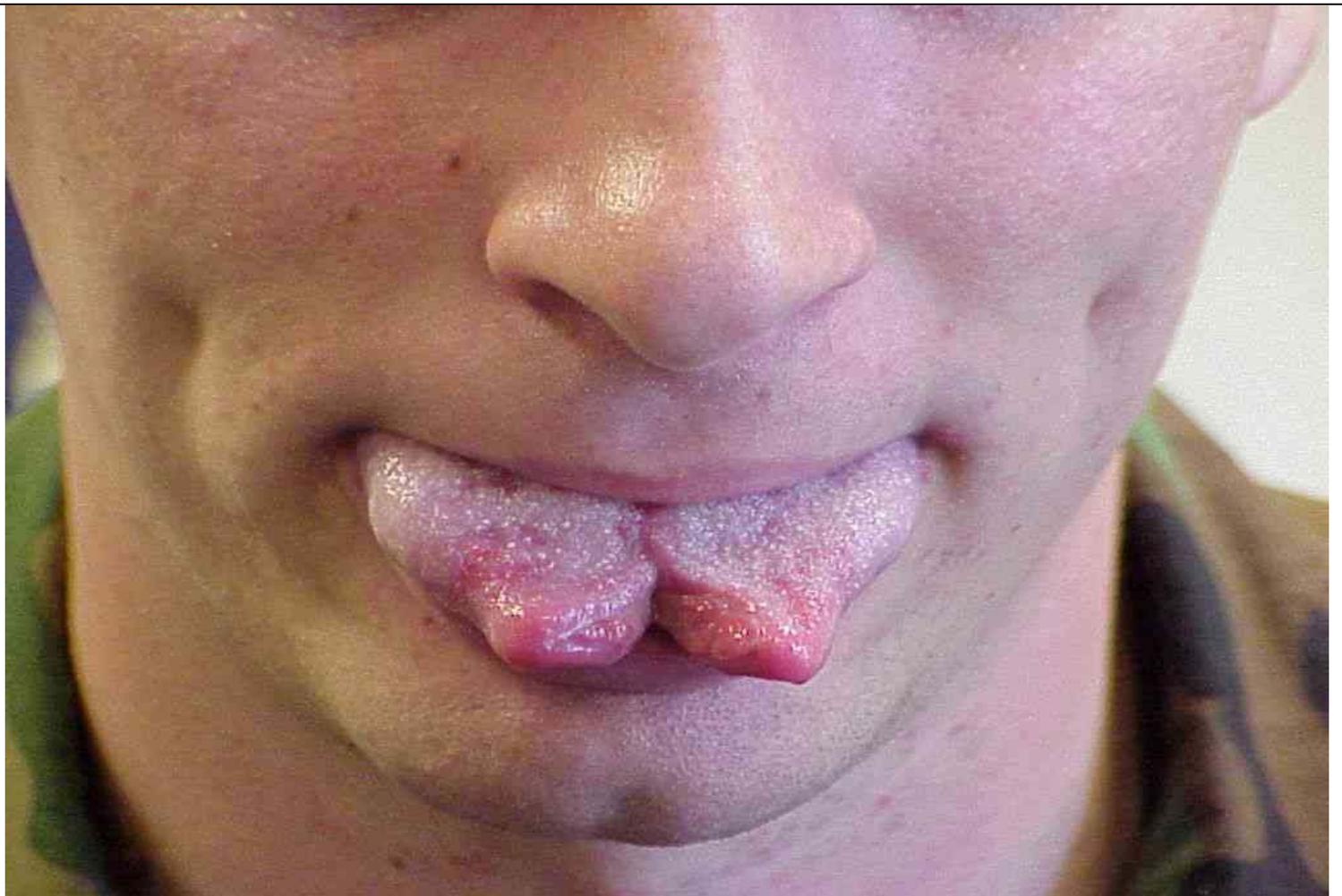












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