



HR 1Source

Your Company's "On-Call" Human Resources Department

## MANAGER TRAINING Document 2

# ADDRESSING BODY ART IN THE WORKPLACE

Owners and senior managers should ensure that front-line managers are familiar with the Company's policy regarding current or future employees displaying body art, including, but not limited to: visible body piercings, decorative body hardware, tattoos, unnatural hair color(s), unprofessional and/or inappropriate apparel. Courts have held that employers have the right to address, in nondiscriminatory policies, the use body art in the workplace, especially for employees in customer facing positions. Policies that are unclear or silent regarding the many forms of body art will sometimes lead to misunderstandings, employee and customer relations friction.

Research has shown that nearly a third of the U.S. population has at least one form of body art. An employer will likely restrict visible body art that is vulgar, demeaning, or profane. Depending on your type of business, you may, for example restrict certain body art that depicts violent acts, certain weapons, dismemberment, frightening scenes or other body art that you consider offensive.

Your policy should be applied even-handedly to employees doing the same job. Consider policy language that is receptive to self-expression yet within the boundaries of what reasonable people would find acceptable. You may want to label your policy as "Standards of Professional Appearance" versus a "Dress Code" or "Uniform Policy."

Connect with the HR experts at HR 1Source for help addressing body art of employees or any other "people" issue that you encounter in the workplace.

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