TAKING A RISK
Since 1995 gang-related clothing has incited at least five shootings, two of which were fatal. Parents should be aware that allowing youth to dress in gang-style clothing, either at school or in the community, might have dangerous consequences. While it is not the intent of companies listed herein to market their products to gang members, many items have acquired meanings in the street gang culture which make them dangerous.

Street gangs in Utah are influenced by California gangs like Crips, Bloods, Surenos, and Nortenos. Additionally, some Utah gangs mimic the Folks- or People-affiliated gangs that originated in the Chicago area. Some gang members, especially those who are hoping to profit from the sale of illegal drugs, will no longer “dress down” because they do not wish to draw the attention of authorities. Even so, there are still many gang members who will wear clothing items to show their gang affiliation.

THE “LOOK”
Gang affiliated youth may wear over-sized pants that sag well below the waistline. Brands which are popular with gang members include Dickeys, Ben Davis, Counties, Frisco Jeans, and other, over-sized brands. In the summer, gang members may cut their pants below the knee and pull up their white socks to the pant line. Sometimes, only the top button will be buttoned on long-sleeved shirts. Many stores carry brands of clothing which could be considered gang-related. Some clothing lines manufacture T-shirts and sweatshirts that feature gang themes.

BANDANNAS:
Bandannas are the “flag” of the street gang culture, and virtually every color can be used to claim gang affiliation. Bandannas are typically worn hanging out of pockets or from the waistband. They are sometimes draped over a shoulder or tied around the head.

BELTS:
Belts (usually webbed, military-style belts) are used as a way of “showing one’s colors,” and are excessively long so that the belt tail can be left hanging down the pant leg. They may be a variety of colors (red, blue, white, black, or green) and gang initials, numbers, or names are often written or embroidered on these belts. Belt buckles may also include letters or numbers. For example: “A” for Avenues, “S” for Surenos, “13” for Surenos, etc.

SHOES:
Popular shoes with gangsters include the black nylon Nike Cortez running shoe which has a white swish stripe, and the white leather Cortez running shoe with the black swish stripe (called “G” Nikes). In addition, British Knights “BK stands for “Blood Killer”) are popular with Crips.

SPORTS CLOTHING:
Gang members may wear clothing items from professional or college sports teams if their colors are the same as the gang’s. Hats and Jackets which have been altered with extra letters, names, numbers, or symbols are especially suspect. Some gang members may dye their pocket linings (usually blue or red). Then they can pull the pocket linings out during a confrontation to show their colors. Gang members also may wear large football jerseys with numbers that symbolize their gang.

Gang members will often wear sports teams’ apparel based on color:
Crips: Michigan, Notre Dame, North Carolina, Georgetown, Dallas Cowboys, and other blue teams
Bloods: Chicago Bulls, Cincinnati Reds, Kansas City Chiefs, Redskins, 49ers, and other red teams
Surenos: Oakland Raiders, Chicago white Sox, Los Angeles Kings
Nortenos: New York Yankees
CUSTOMIZED CLOTHING:
Gang members commonly have T-shirts or hats customized by local T-shirt shops that reflect the wearer’s gang affiliation. Often, Old English-style letters, words, or phrases are added to clothing to identify a gang.

TATTOOS:
Tattoos are frequently used as a gang-identifier, and are typically located on the face, hands, neck, stomach, arms, and back. The most common gang tattoo is three dots arranged in a triangle which stands for “Mi Vida Loca” (My Crazy Life). Other common gang tattoos include the initials of the gang, a gang moniker, or happy and sad faces (meaning, “smile now, cry later”). Folk gang members may have tattoos with a six-pointed star, the number six, or an upward-pointing pitchfork. Members who affiliate with People gangs may have tattoos with a five-pointed star, the number five, or a pitchfork pointed down.

STRAIGHT EDGE:
Straight Edge members typically wear the big, baggy pants and will frequently shave their heads or cut their hair extremely short, and grow large sideburns or a goatee. They often tattoo themselves with their symbol, the “X.” If they wear sports apparel, their favorites are the New York Yankees and Syracuse. Hardline Straight Edge members (militant vegans) will not wear leather. Common Straight Edge slogans include “Poison Free,” “Drug Free,” and “One Life, One Truth.” Hardliners have embraced the animal rights movement, and many have been involved in terrorist actions. They may use “XXX” or the phrase “Hardline” to identify themselves.

OTHER IDENTIFIERS:
5 People affiliates utilize the number 5 or a 5-pointed star
6 Folks affiliates use the number 6 or a 6-pointed star
6 or VI Represents 6th North Nortenos
9 Represents 9th West or the Big Dick Gang
13 Indicates Surenos affiliation
14 Indicates Nortenos affiliation
15 Represents 15th Street Crips
801 Utah’s area code, sometimes used by gangs
213, 310,
714 California area codes are sometimes used by gangs
17 Used by Varrio Loco Town
19 Used by 19th Street, a Surenos gang
21 21st Street, a local gang
33 Represents Lay Low Crips
38 Surenos 38th Street
187 A California Penal Code number, which stands for homicide
CK Crip Killer
BK Blood Killer
QK QVO Killer
SK Surenos Killer

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