



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
3000 MARINE CORPS PENTAGON
WASHINGTON DC 20350-3000

MCO 1730.9
M&RA (MPO)
12 July 2021

MARINE CORPS ORDER 1730.9

From: Commandant of the Marine Corps
To: Distribution List

Subj: ACCOMMODATION OF RELIGIOUS PRACTICES IN THE MARINE CORPS

Ref: (a) Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States
(b) The Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 (RFRA), 42 U.S.C. § 2000bb, *et seq.*
(c) 10 U.S. Code §774
(d) DoDI 1300.17, Religious Liberty in the Military Services
(e) SECNAVINST 1730.8B CH-1, Accommodation of Religious Practices
(f) MCRP 6-11D, Sustaining the Transformation (28 Jun 99)
(g) MCTP 6-10A CH 1, Sustaining the Transformation (4 Apr 18)
(h) MCWP 6-11, Leading Marines (formerly FMFM 1-0)
(i) MCO 1020.34H, Marine Corps Uniform Regulations

Encl: (1) Chaplain Interview Checklist Template
(2) Chaplain Memorandum for the Record Template
(3) Religious Accommodation Review Board

1. Situation. Pursuant to reference (a), Service members have a right to observe the tenets of their religion or to observe no religion at all, as provided in this Order. Reference (b) prohibits the federal government from substantially burdening a person's exercise of religion unless the government can demonstrate the burden to the person is: (1) in furtherance of a compelling government interest; and (2) the least restrictive means of furthering that compelling government interest. This Order implements Marine Corps policy for religious accommodation requests in accordance with references (d) and (e).

2. Mission. As required by references (a) - (d), the Marine Corps will accommodate individual expressions of sincerely held beliefs (conscience, moral principles, or religious beliefs) which do not have an adverse impact on a compelling government interest. Religious accommodation includes excusing a service member from an otherwise applicable military policy, practice, or duty. In accordance with reference (d), if such a military policy, practice, or duty substantially burdens a service member's exercise of religion, the accommodation request can only be denied if the cognizant Adjudication Authority determines the following: (1) the military policy, practice, or duty is in furtherance of a compelling government interest; and (2) the military policy, practice, or duty is the least restrictive means of furthering that compelling governmental interest.

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3. Execution

a. Commander's Intent

(1) Per references (b) through (d), **Marine Corps Adjudication Authorities will accommodate practices of a Marine based on a sincerely held religious belief when such requests do not adversely affect a Marine or unit's mission accomplishment capabilities.** Accommodation includes excusing a Marine from an otherwise applicable military policy, practice, or duty. In accordance with reference (d), if such military policy, practice, or duty substantially burdens a Marine's exercise of religion then **a request for accommodation can only be denied if:**

(a) The military policy, practice, or duty is in furtherance of a compelling governmental interest; and

(b) The denial is the least restrictive means of furthering that compelling interest.

(2) In applying the standard of paragraphs 3.a.(1)(a) and 3.a.(1)(b), **the burden of proof is placed upon the Marine Corps,** not the individual requesting the exemption.

(3) Commanders making final determinations on requests will consider, with appropriate annotation on the determination, the elements of mission accomplishment that form the basis of the compelling governmental interest.

(4) Commanders must remain objective in considering requests to accommodate religious practices. Each request for religious accommodation must be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, giving consideration to the full range of facts and circumstances relevant to the specific request. It is essential that commanders articulate the factual basis underlying their decision.

b. **Compelling Governmental Interest** The United States Marine Corps has **a compelling governmental interest in mission accomplishment** at the individual, unit, and organizational levels. **The necessary elements of mission accomplishment include:** (1) military readiness; (2) unit cohesion; (3) good order and discipline; and (4) **health and safety.** **Adjudication Authorities must pay particular attention to how religious accommodation request determinations will impact the unit's ability to accomplish the mission.** In making their decision, the matters to be considered by a commander include, but are not limited to, the following:

(1) The Marine Corps has a compelling interest in instilling in each Marine an identity as part of a team. Almost everything the Marine Corps does, it does as a team. It trains as a team, fights as a team, wins as a team. This identity is in the very nature of a "Corps." To be effective, every member of the team must commit to accepting a role and a willingness to sacrifice individually to carry out that role in support of the team. To defend our nation, some Marines have been, and will be called upon to make the ultimate sacrifice. A commitment of this magnitude runs counter to humanity's most primal survival instincts, but the mission of the Corps requires it. The very nature of being a Marine means possessing more than a willingness to go into harm's way—it requires the strength of character to move forward in environments that will cost Marine lives. To do this, Marines must have more than courage. They must have the highest level of

discipline and a unique trust in those with whom they serve. They must know at an instinctual level that their fellow Marines are as committed to stepping forward in those dangerous environments to execute the mission. This discipline is forged through Marine training and culture, instilled as an ethos at the very beginning of a recruit's journey to becoming a Marine, and carried with them into those dangerous and difficult environments for which the Corps was created.

(2) The Marine way of life includes the use of certain tools to instill and maintain that team mindset. One such tool is the uniform. For the Marine, uniformity is a reminder for the individual that they have joined a storied team with a warrior culture. An individual joins the Corps and through the transformation to Marine, joins a team that relies on individual sacrifice and performance in the context of executing the Corps' mission. As a practical matter, this means that everyone desiring to be a Marine often must be willing to give up something to accept uniformity and what it means. This common sacrifice contributes to the forging of unit cohesion.

(3) Importantly, the uniform is a representation of commitment to other Marines. It does not supersede an individual Marine's personal beliefs or values. No Marine will be asked to change their personal beliefs, including religious beliefs, which are protected by the United States Constitution. The Corps has an obligation to try to find ways to facilitate each Marine's commitment to their faith as well as to each other. To facilitate that obligation, the Corps has created a process enabling each Marine to request a waiver of its regulations to allow the display or facilitation of articles of faith. That process is outlined herein.

c. Pre-accession Requests and Delayed Entry Program. During the screening process, the recruiter will explain to the applicant the Marine Corps' uniform and grooming policies and the religious accommodation policy. An applicant will acknowledge an understanding of these policies, in writing, and inform the recruiter if they maintain religious beliefs that would require an accommodation of the uniform and/or grooming policies. The recruiter will explain the conditions and considerations taken by commands and individuals when an accommodation has been requested as described in sections 3.c, 3.d, 3.e, and 3.f of this Order. An applicant must be determined by the Recruiting Station to be a qualified applicant for accession before a request for religious accommodation will be considered. The applicant will acknowledge, in writing, an understanding of these policies. Once a decision on the accommodation request is made, the applicant may accept the decision and then be contracted and enter the delayed entry program or direct ship. While in the delayed entry program, the recruiter reinforces the requirements to be a Marine, and begins to instill the sense of team over self. The qualified applicant begins to gain an understanding of what it means to be a Marine and begins transforming underlying assumptions of being a Marine into service beliefs of being a Marine. This transformation, as identified in references (f) and (g), begins as the qualified applicant prepares for recruit training.

d. Entry Level Training (ELT). Of particular importance is the recruit training phase which begins the ELT continuum. During recruit training, the recruit is transformed from a civilian into a United States Marine. Recruit training instills the understanding of, and ability to, put the needs of the unit over an individual Marine's needs. Uniformity plays an integral role in the Transformation. As the Marine proceeds through the ELT continuum, the

Marine is increasingly introduced to working with military equipment, and the associated necessary health and safety precautions.

e. Unit Assignment

(1) Fleet and Deployable units. Marines assigned to Fleet and deployable units face the possibility of protecting the interest of the United States in the full range of conflict at any time. Unit readiness, safety and security are essential in ensuring Marine units are ready to respond to crisis. Marines assigned to these units are involved in many inherently dangerous activities to include combat operations. Personal protective equipment is required. Some accommodations may not be suitable during such assignments and previously approved accommodations are subject to review. During combat deployments, the needs of the unit are greater than the needs of the individual.

(2) Non-deployable units. Marines assigned to non-deployable units are typically involved in fewer inherently dangerous activities and have less reliance on personal protective equipment and therefore, health and safety considerations are weighed against some accommodations. However, the need for uniformity in public-facing ceremonial duties is high. Marines who perform ceremonial duties must be mindful that they represent the entirety of the Corps to the general public and to each specific audience for whom ceremonies are performed. When performing public-facing ceremonial roles, Marines must signal that the Corps is neutral on matters of religion. This is an important representational role, one that inspires others to join the Corps and that communicates to national leaders and others that the Corps is achieving its goal of creating a cohesive group of warriors capable of defending the nation's interests.

f. Other Considerations

(1) The Marine Corps requires immunizations for all Marines, based upon our compelling interest in military readiness and the health and safety of the Total Force. Immunizations are an important component of individual and unit medical readiness. Marines may be called upon to operate in environments and under conditions that increase their exposure and susceptibility to illness, particularly in deployed environments and when Marines are required to be in close proximity to each other such as recruit training and embarked on ships, aircraft, and military vehicles. Mission accomplishment may require that Marines be immunized to protect against disease due to increased exposure potential, or to conform with international health regulations incident to foreign travel or unit deployment.

(2) The Marine Corps generally accommodates religious dietary observances by adopting a standard core menu that supports many religious dietary requirements at military dining facilities, ashore and afloat, as well as by issuing meals, ready-to-eat (MREs) and meals, religious, ready-to-eat (MRE-R) in field environments. However, forward deployed dining facilities may not be able to provide for all dietary practices and MRE or MRE-Rs cannot always be guaranteed. When military dining facilities, MREs or MRE-Rs cannot meet a Marine's religious dietary observances during training events, commanders may authorize Marines to provide their own supplemental food rations to the extent that health, safety or mission readiness of the unit is not compromised.

(3) The Marine Corps generally accommodates religious observance requests by permitting Marines time off for worship and similar religious observance practices, consistent with mission accomplishment. Time off for religious observances can routinely be addressed by modifying duty schedules, or by granting leave or liberty when the time required for religious observance would interfere with the performance of normal duties. However, a Marine must also be prepared to perform alternative duty or duty hours for the benefit of the team. Marines must also recognize that time for religious observances may not always be readily available in a forward-deployed or operational environment.

4. Concept of Operations

a. Accommodation Requests

(1) Qualified Applicant Requests. Qualified applicants will be briefed on the requirements of references (d) and (e) and this Order and screened on their willingness to comply with reference (i) if accessed into the Marine Corps. Qualified applicants may submit a pre-accession request for religious accommodations in accordance with this Order. Qualified applicants requesting an accommodation will be interviewed by a chaplain, per enclosures (1) and (2). A decision concerning the request must be made prior to participation in the commissioning program, warrant officer program, enlistment, reenlistment, enrollment in a Military Service Academy or a Senior Reserve Officers' Training program, or award of such scholarship or benefit. Pre-accession requests for religious accommodations will be forwarded through the chain of command to the Commanding General, Marine Corps Recruiting Command (CG, MCRC), for further coordination with the Deputy Commandant, Manpower and Reserve Affairs (DC M&RA). Qualified applicants who submit such requests may not be accepted for enlistment before DC M&RA makes a determination on their requests.

(2) Service Members. Service member religious accommodation requests will be submitted using the NAVMC 10274 AA form. Requests requiring DC M&RA decision will be forwarded, via the chain of command, to include the first Marine Corps General Court-Martial Convening Authority (GCMCA) in the chain of command. Service members submitting a religious accommodation request must continue to comply with the policy, practice, or duty from which an accommodation has been requested until informed that the request has been approved by the appropriate authority unless exceptional circumstances exist. The cognizant Appellate Authority may determine whether a particular circumstance qualifies as an exceptional circumstance. For the purposes of this Order, a cadet or midshipman enrolled at a Military Service Academy or in a Reserve Officers' Training Corps are considered service members.

(3) Minimum requirements. Religious accommodation requests will include the nature of the accommodation requested, duration of the request, the religious or sincerely held spiritual basis for the request, and the faith group or belief system identified with the request. Requesters are encouraged, but not required, to propose viable alternatives that could balance the Marine Corps and Marine's interests appropriately (e.g., limiting a request to the wear of certain religious attire in an indoor setting or identifying an alternative immunization). If applicable, the request must also include a photo or description of any head covering, religious affiliated item, grooming standard, and/or personal appearance for which the requester is requesting accommodation. For Service member requests, an

interview from the cognizant command chaplain is required. See enclosures (1) and (2).

b. Adjudication Authority. Religious accommodation requests that can be approved/denied consistent with Department of Defense, Department of Navy, and Marine Corps Orders and regulations will be reviewed and acted upon by a Marine Corps special court-martials convening authority (SPCMCA). This type of request includes requests for dietary practices and time off for religious observances. **Requests for the accommodation of religious practices that require the waiver of Department of Navy and Marine Corps Orders and regulations will be submitted to DC M&RA via the first GCMCA. This type of request includes requests for grooming, religious apparel, and medical requirements.** Prior to an Adjudication Authority determination, the authority must consult with their staff judge advocate.

(1) Review and Action Timelines

(a) **Review and Action Timelines.** Adjudication Authority review and final determinations for requests that can be approved consistent with existing orders, regulations, and policies **must be made within 30 business days of receipt** of a request that meets the minimum requirements under this Order. However, Adjudication Authority review and a final determination for requests originating from outside the United States or for Reserve Component Service members not on active duty must be made within 60 days of receiving a request that meets the minimum requirements under this Order. **Exceptions to these timelines may be granted only in exceptional circumstances.**

(b) **Requests that require the waiver of otherwise applicable orders, regulations, and policies, must be forwarded to DC M&RA within 30 days of receipt** of a request that meets the minimum requirements under this Order. Requests originating from outside the United States or for Reserve Component service members not on active duty must be forwarded to the DC M&RA within 60 days of receipt of a request that meets the minimum requirements under this Order. DC M&RA review and final determinations for these requests must be made within 60 days of receipt of a request. In addition, **the individual requesting the accommodation must be informed of the final determination within five business days of final action.**

(c) All pre-accession qualified applicant requests will be submitted to DC M&RA for final determination. The request must be received by DC M&RA within 30 days from submission to recruiter.

(d) Per reference (d) to establish controls for compliance, commands will inform DC M&RA when a request for accommodation is received.

(2) **Standard of Review.** The Marine Corps will approve an individual request for accommodation unless such approval erodes a compelling government interest. The factors detailed above shall be considered. Adjudication Authorities must demonstrate that their determinations consider whether the request is based on a sincerely held religious belief and whether there is a less restrictive alternative means of meeting the compelling government interest while providing for a religious accommodation. Adjudication Authorities must consider every request on a case-by-case basis. However, Adjudication Authorities may consider: (1) the individual and the cumulative effects of granting similar religious accommodation requests on the necessary elements of mission accomplishment; and (2) whether any existing exemptions available for other individuals or entities could be expanded to include the

requester in whole or in part. Pursuant to reference (d), Adjudication Authorities must ensure, to the greatest extent practical, the consistent application of the policies and procedures prescribed by this Order. This should include a consistent application of prior accommodation decisions.

(3) In making their decision, the matters to be considered and annotated by an adjudication authority include, but are not limited to, the following:

(a) The unit's readiness and potential impacts of the request. This includes consideration of the overall mission of the unit and of the particular position the service member occupies.

(b) Any adverse health and safety impacts of the request. This includes potential interference with the proper functioning of special or protective military equipment (for example a respirator, gas mask, protective helmet or communication gear).

(c) Whether or not accommodations of similar nature have been granted in the past within the unit and the cumulative impact of repeated similar accommodations. Note, requests to accommodate religious practices should not be approved or denied simply because similar requests were approved or denied in the past.

(d) Least restrictive alternate means to fulfil the request that support the Service member in the exercise of their religious beliefs and practices.

(4) Adjudication Authority Notice of Resolution

(a) A qualified applicant or service member will be informed of the approval or disapproval of their request for accommodation in accordance with the review and action timelines in this Order.

(b) A religious accommodation request may be granted in whole or in part. The qualified applicant or service member will be informed in writing of any conditions or limitations placed on the approval to meet the compelling governmental interest in mission accomplishment. For example, conditions related to deployment, health and safety issues relative to particular assignments or types of assignments, or training events or ceremonial occasions that require a service member to conform to military standards to protect health and safety, or maintain good order and discipline.

(c) A qualified applicant or service member whose request is granted in whole or in part will be informed, in writing, of the specific elements of that approval.

c. Administrative Appeal Process. An appeal must be requested in writing within five business days of receipt of final decision by the adjudication authority. An appeal must be forwarded via the chain of command, through the first Marine Corps GCMCA in the chain of command, for appellate decision.

(1) Appellate Authority. The appellate authority for religious accommodation requests that can be approved consistent with Department of Navy and Marine Corps Orders and regulations is the first Marine Corps GCMCA.

The Appellate Authority for religious accommodation requests that require waiver of Department of Navy and Marine Corps Orders or regulations is the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC). The Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps or the Director of the Marine Corps Staff may take action on behalf of the CMC. Decisions by an Appellate Authority are final. A Service member who desires to appeal DC M&RA's decision will submit the appeal in standard naval letter addressed to CMC within 10 business days of receiving the determination. The appeal should provide substantive information as to why the Service member or applicant believes the decision was unjust. The appeal will be sent to CMC(MPO) at MPO@usmc.mil.

d. Duration and Proposals to Rescind. In accordance with reference (d), an approved religious accommodation request will remain in effect during follow-on duties, assignments, or locations, and for the duration of a service member's military career, including after promotions, reenlistment or commissioning, unless and until rescinded in accordance with the requirements of this Order. As detailed above, the Adjudication Authority may place conditions or limitations on the request, for example those related to deployment, health and safety issues relative to particular assignments or types of assignments, or training events or ceremonial occasions.

(1) Rescissions and modifications. An approved accommodation may be subject to review and rescission, in whole or in part, at any time, based upon a determination that the circumstances and conditions under which the grant of accommodation was approved have changed (e.g., deployment, new duties, or other material change in circumstances). The standard for repealing a previously granted accommodation is the same as the standard for denying an accommodation request. Proposals to review, rescind, or modify an approved accommodation will, at a minimum, originate from the cognizant SPCMCA and will state the basis on which the proposed review, rescission or modification of the religious accommodation has been submitted. When such a proposal is initiated, the service member will be afforded the following:

(a) A written summary of the nature of the materially changed circumstances that require such review and repeal;

(b) No fewer than 10 business days to review and comment on the proposed rescission of the accommodation;

(c) An opportunity to review and comment on any endorsements of the proposal from the chain of command;

(d) Subject to security classification requirements, the opportunity to review and comment on any documents or attachments to the proposal or subsequent endorsements.

(2) Exigent Circumstances

(a) Previously approved requests may be revoked due to exigent circumstances in furtherance of a compelling government interest and due to operational necessity, when time is of the essence, and no less restrictive means of religious accommodation are available. Exigent circumstances may include instances in which a competent military authority has identified a specific and concrete threat to the health and safety (such as toxic chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear agents that may merit a heightened protective posture). During exigent circumstances, the cognizant GCMCA, after consultation with their staff judge advocate, must notify a

service member of the need to suspend a religious accommodation, the basis for the suspension, the date the suspension will go into effect, and the service member's right to appeal. The cognizant GCMCA shall inform DC M&RA of any actions to suspend a religious accommodation due to exigent circumstances within three business days. Service members will have five business days to submit their appeal to DC M&RA. A Service member may temporarily self-suspend an approved accommodation without surrendering the approval.

(b) **Imminent Threat Exigent Circumstances.** During exigent circumstances involving an imminent threat to individual, unit, or organizational health and safety, the GCMCA may shorten or eliminate the notification and appeal process until such time as the imminent threat to health and safety no longer exists. The cognizant GCMCA shall inform DC M&RA of any actions to suspend a religious accommodation due to imminent and exigent circumstances within three business days.

e. Subordinate Element Tasks

(1) Deputy Commandant for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (DC M&RA)

(a) Establish a non-statutory Religious Accommodation Review Board ("Board") to consider religious accommodation requests requiring DC M&RA determination (see enclosure (3)).

(b) In accordance with references (d) and (e), the DC M&RA is delegated the authority to act on religious accommodation requests that require waiver of Department of Navy and Marine Corps issuances, directives, and regulations.

(2) Commanding General, Training and Education Command (CG TECOM)

(a) Ensure the training curriculum for commanding officers and sergeants major include appropriate education and training on this Order.

(b) Provide subject matter expertise on the Transformation Process during the ELT training continuum.

(3) Commanding General, Marine Corps Recruiting Command (CG MCRC)

(a) Ensure qualified applicants are screened on their willingness to comply with reference (i), if inducted into the Marine Corps. Qualified applicants may submit a pre-accession request for religious accommodation in accordance with this order.

(b) Qualified applicants who submit such requests may not be accepted for enlistment before DC M&RA makes a determination on their requests. Pre-accession requests for religious accommodations will be forwarded through the chain of command to the CG MCRC, for further coordination with the DC M&RA.

(c) Ensure Service members in the Ready Reserve submit their request for religious accommodation through Marine Corps Individual Reserve Supporting Activity chain of command before joining them through Prior Service Recruiting.

(d) Ensure recruiters are provided appropriate education and training on this Order.

(4) Chaplain of the Marine Corps

(a) Provide a chaplain advisor to support the Religious Accommodation Review Board, who assess the interviewing chaplain's advisement to the command concerning the sincerity and the nature (i.e., conscience, moral principles, or religious beliefs) of the held beliefs.

(b) Ensure chaplains complete enclosures (1) and (2) for all accommodation requests.

(c) Ensure chaplains assigned to the Marine Corps are provided appropriate education and training on this Order.

(5) Staff Judge Advocate to the Commandant of the Marine Corps (SJA to the CMC)

(a) Provide a legal advisor to support the Religious Accommodation Review Board.

(b) Ensure staff judge advocates assigned to the Marine Corps commands are provided appropriate education and training on this Order.

(6) Director, Health Services (HS). Provide a medical advisory for any medical related accommodation request.

f. Coordinating Instructions

(1) DC M&RA will make determinations on requests for grooming, religious apparel, and medical practices (including, but not limited to, immunizations and deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) specimen samples).

(2) Commanding officers will make determination on dietary requests and requests for time off for religious observances in accordance with the guidance in this Order.

(3) **Service members requesting an accommodation within the context of this Order will be interviewed by a chaplain.** The chaplain will conduct an interview of the Marine and record it with the templates found in enclosures (1) and (2). **The interviewing chaplain shall assess the sincerity and the nature (i.e., conscience, moral principles, or religious beliefs) of the held belief.**

(4) Nothing in this Order precludes disciplinary or administrative action for conduct by a service member that is prohibited by Chapter 47 of Title 10, U.S. Code, also known as the "Uniform Code of Military Justice."

(5) An expression of sincerely held beliefs may not be used as the basis of any adverse personnel action, discrimination, or denial of promotion, schooling, training, or assignment.

g. Definitions

(1) Business Days. Any day except any Saturday, any Sunday, any day which is a federal legal holiday, or a day in which the Office of Personnel

Management designates the federal offices in the Washington D.C. area as closed.

(2) Exceptional Circumstances. An incident that is out of the ordinary, unavoidable, or unexpected where time is of the essence and the incident requires immediate and mandatory intervention. For example, a showing of exceptional circumstance may include the exercise of certain religious practices for a medical emergency or funeral rite.

(3) Qualified Applicant. A Marine Corps applicant who has been found to be mentally, morally, and physically qualified for accession in to the Marine Corps. This term includes applicants applying for a commissioning program, warrant officer program, enlistment, reenlistment, or enrollment in a military service academy or Reserve Officers' Training Corps program (including military service academy preparatory schools).

(4) Service Member. For the purposes of this Order, this term means a member of the Marine Corps. Additionally, this term means members of the Navy who are serving with Marine Corps units and authorized to wear the Marine Corps uniform.

5. Administration and Logistics

a. Records Management. Records created as a result of this directive shall be managed according to National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)-approved dispositions per SECNAV M-5210.1 CH-1 to ensure proper maintenance, use, accessibility and preservation, regardless of format or medium. Records disposition schedules are located on the Department of the Navy/Assistant for Administration (DON/AA), Directives and Records Management Division (DRMD) portal page at:
<https://portal.secnav.navy.mil/orgs/DUSNM/DONAA/DRM/Records-and-Information-Management/Approved%20Record%20Schedules/Forms/AllItems.aspx>. Refer to MCO 5210.11F for Marine Corps records management policy and procedures.

b. Privacy Act. Any misuse or unauthorized disclosure of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) may result in both civil and criminal penalties. The Department of the Navy (DON) recognizes that the privacy of an individual is a personal and fundamental right that shall be respected and protected. The DON's need to collect, use, maintain, or disseminate PII about individuals for purposes of discharging its statutory responsibilities shall be balanced against the individuals' right to be protected against unwarranted invasion of privacy. All collection, use, maintenance, or dissemination of PII shall be in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended (5 U.S.C. 552a) and implemented per SECNAVINST 5211.5F.

c. Recommendations. Recommendations for the content of this Order may be sent to Manpower and Reserve Affairs (M&RA), Manpower Military Policy (MPO) branch.

6. Command and Signal

- a. Command. This Order is applicable to the Total Force.
- b. Signal. This Order effective date signed.



David H. Berger
Commandant of the Marine Corps

Distribution: PCN 10202400600

CHAPLAIN INTERVIEW CHECKLIST TEMPLATE

Requester:			Interview Date:
Name:			Chaplain Interviewer:
Phone:			Phone:
Email:			E-mail:
Command:			Chaplain's Command:
Interview Preliminaries			
Yes	No	N/A	
			Chaplain reviewed policy and doctrine on religious accommodation and the policy for which the requestor is seeking accommodation.
			Requester was notified that the interview is not confidential and will be used to advise the command.
			Chaplain explained to the requester that confidential support can be received from another chaplain.
			Requester has been granted a waiver for this practice previously.
Type of Waiver Requested			
Yes	No	N/A	
			Uniform standards
			Grooming standards
			Immunization requirements
			DNA sampling
			Other (Please describe):
Interview			
Yes	No	N/A	
			Requester's beliefs (conscience, moral principles, or religious beliefs) seemed honestly and sincerely held using one or more of the following factors:
			1. Requester was credible (consistently keeps tenets, practices, etc.).
			2. Requester's demeanor and pattern of conduct are consistent with the request.
			3. Requester participates in activities associated with the belief(s).
			4. Other persons supporting the claim are credible.
			5. Request is supported by letter(s) of verification or endorsement from an organization espousing the beliefs which are the basis for the claim.
			Alternate means of accommodating the practice were explored in the interview.
Process Checklist			
Yes	No	N/A	
			Chaplain has prepared a memorandum documenting the interview.
			Chaplain reviewed memorandum with requester and provided a copy.
			Chaplain submitted the memorandum and this document to the commanding officer via chain of command.
			Chaplain referred requester to command to process request.

CHAPLAIN MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD TEMPLATE

Date

From: [Chaplain's rank and name], CHC, USN
To: [Commanding Officer of requester]

Subj: REQUEST FOR A WAIVER OF POLICY TO ACCOMMODATE
PRACTICE BASED ON RELIGIOUS BELIEF ICO [REQUESTER'S
RANK, NAME]

Ref: (a) DoDI 1300.17
(b) SECNAVINST 1730.8B

1. (Requester's rank and name) has submitted a request for accommodation of a religious practice. Per MCO 1730.9, I interviewed the requester on (date). I explained that this interview would not be a confidential communication as defined by reference (b) and informed the requestor that referral for confidential chaplain support was available.
2. Nature of the request. (Provide a narrative summary of the request for religious accommodation and whether or not the requestor has previously had this or any other related request approved or denied). The narrative summary should also identify the beliefs are derived from a matter of conscience, rooted in moral principles, or religious beliefs.
3. Basis. (Identify the religious beliefs on which the accommodation request is based and provide a professional and objective opinion regarding the religious importance of the request to the member.
4. Alternate Means. (Indicate alternate means of meeting the request).
5. Sincerity. (Assess the sincerity of the requester. The memorandum should focus on the sincerity of the member's personal religious beliefs, including the information provided during the interview).
6. My contact information is (telephone number and e-mail address).

[Signature]

Copy to:
(Rank and name of requester)

RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION REVIEW BOARD

1. The Religious Accommodation Review Board will use existing M&RA board structure and will consist of a minimum of three voting members assigned by DC M&RA. The Board will be supported by non-voting advisors, to include a recorder, a legal advisor, a chaplain advisor, and other personnel as determined by the Board President.
2. The Board will make written recommendations as to the merits of each religious accommodation request and whether the DC M&RA should approve or deny, in whole or in part, each request. The Board may also recommend an accommodation request be temporarily or partially denied. For example, the Board may recommend a particular accommodation request be denied for a short period of time during ELT (e.g., during recruit training), for safety reasons (i.e., within 25 feet of an operating aircraft), or during combat operations (i.e., to ensure the proper wear or function of special or protective clothing or equipment).
3. For each accommodation request where the Board recommends an accommodation be temporarily approved or denied, the Board is encouraged to make a recommendation on what conditions could affect the modification or revocation of an accommodation.
4. The Board is encouraged to make specific recommendations that will allow consistent accommodation decision for Marines serving in similar MOSSs, geographical locations, and duty assignment.