

Accommodating Cultural and Religious Beliefs at Work

Legal Requirement

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits employers from discriminating against individuals because of their religion in hiring, firing, promotion, and other issues of employment. This includes providing reasonable accommodations for religious beliefs and practices. If this poses a problem, it is up to the employer to prove that the accommodation is unreasonable enough to cause the organization undue hardship.

How to Respond

At UMHS we not only want to meet this requirement, but exceed it. Our intent is to focus on and honor diversity. To this end, some ideas you can use in your own department are:

- Spend time learning about the beliefs and practices of different religions.
- Where necessary, alter work schedules and breaks to accommodate religious practices. If possible, provide all employees with a flexible work schedule.
- Brainstorm solutions with each employee who needs to be accommodated.
- Provide a quiet place for people of different faiths to pray.
- When serving food at a department function, ask employees if they have any special food requirements.
- Check with the Human Resources department if you have questions about accommodation.

For further reading:

- Crim, K. R. (ed.), Bullard, R. A. & Shinn, L. D. (1990). *The Perennial Dictionary of World Religions*. San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins.