



REQUESTING RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATIONS

The Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 applies Title VII of the Civil Rights Act to House employees, including the right to a change or adjustment to the work environment to accommodate an employee's religious beliefs and practices.

RIGHTS

The CAA requires employing offices at the House to “reasonably accommodate” an employee’s religious beliefs, observances and practices, unless the accommodation causes an “undue hardship” on business operations. What constitutes a “reasonable accommodation” and “undue hardship” depend on the facts of each situation. Whether a religious accommodation can be made without “undue hardship” will depend on the type of work an employee does and size of the office.

Generally, the employing office must make a serious attempt to create a system or structure that will accommodate an employee’s religious practices.

MAKING A REQUEST

The best practice to request a religious accommodation is to indicate your religious commitment, including expected absences for holidays, as soon as possible. To do so, employees should disclose this information after they have accepted the job. If the employee was not observant at the time of hire, the employee should notify the employer once they become observant and anticipate the need for leave for religious holidays and practices.

NAVIGATING THE CONVERSATION AND INITIATING THE ACCOMMODATIONS REQUEST

The employee should request the accommodation (absence, shift in schedule, etc.) well in advance of the date AND later remind the employer of an approved absence or other accommodation. This can be achieved through a calendar invitation or by email.

ACCOMMODATION PLANNING

Employees should be proactive in resolving any conflicts between their job duties and the religious accommodation. For example, if an employee realizes in advance that their absence or other accommodation will leave the office short-staffed, they should raise the issue and propose a viable solution, if possible.

EXAMPLES OF RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATIONS

- Voluntary substitution of another coworker for an event/assignment/office coverage
- Flexible Scheduling (i.e., work on a Sunday to make up for a weekday absence; work on other national holidays or office-observed holidays; work longer hours other days)
- Temporary change in job assignments
- Approved unpaid leave (if paid leave is not available)

**CONTACT THE OFFICE OF
EMPLOYEE ADVOCACY.
PHONE: 202-225-8800
EMAIL:
EMPLOYEE.ADVOCACY@
MAIL.HOUSE.GOV**