

KITSAP COUNTY RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION POLICY

I. Purpose

Kitsap County is committed to fostering and maintaining a respectful, productive, inclusive, and equitable workplace. It is Kitsap County's policy to accommodate sincerely held religious beliefs or practices if such accommodation does not result in undue hardship to the County.

This policy is intended to provide guidance on the provision of reasonable religious accommodations for employees and applicants of Kitsap County, in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws.

This policy applies to all departments under the direction of the Board of County Commissioners and any Elected Office adopting this policy.

II. Definitions

- A. **Religious Belief or Practice:** Includes all aspects of religious observance and practice, as well as beliefs. This may include traditional, organized religions, religions with theistic or non-theistic beliefs, as well as religious beliefs that are new, uncommon, or not part of a formal church or sect.
- B. **Reasonable Accommodation:** A change in the work environment or in the way tasks are customarily performed that enables an employee to practice their religion without undue hardship to the County.
- C. **Employee:** For purposes of this policy, the term "employee" means current employees.
- D. **Essential Function:** An essential function is a fundamental job duty of a position an employee must be able to perform, with or without reasonable accommodation.

III. Policy and Procedure

Employees should contact their supervisor or manager regarding a request for religious accommodation. The supervisor or manager shall inform the employee that the request must be submitted in writing on the form available through the Human Resources Department, and must include:

- The nature of the religious belief or practice;
- The specific accommodation requested;
- The duration of the requested accommodation, if known.

- A. Upon receipt of the request, supervisors or managers must:

- Consult Human Resources to evaluate the request.

Supervisors may not question the validity of an employee's religious belief but may ask for clarification necessary to understand the accommodation request.

- B. Human Resources will engage with the supervisor or manager and the employee to determine if an accommodation is possible and/or whether it would be an undue hardship.
 - Examples of reasonable accommodations may include flexible scheduling (e.g. for prayer, Sabbath observance, or religious holidays), voluntary shift swaps or substitutions, exceptions to dress and grooming policies, use of break time for religious observance, modifying workplace policies where possible to accommodate religious practices.
- C. If an employee rejects a reasonable accommodation that is necessary to enable the employee to perform the essential functions of the position, and cannot, as a result of that rejection, perform the essential functions of the position, the employee will not be considered qualified to remain in the position.
- D. Human Resources will be responsible for maintaining records of requests and determinations. This information will be kept confidential and shared only with individuals who need it to make decisions or implement the accommodation.
- E. If an employee believes their request for religious accommodation was not adequately addressed, the employee should contact the Human Resources Director to attempt to reach resolution of their concerns. Employees may instead contact the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) or the Washington State Human Rights Commission.
- F. Applicants for employment should contact the Human Resources Department for religious accommodation requests during the hiring process.

IV. Retaliation

Kitsap County strictly prohibits retaliation against any employee or applicant for requesting religious accommodation or for participating in an investigation related to such a request. Retaliation may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Employees wishing to report that they experienced retaliation for requesting religious accommodation should submit a retaliation complaint on the Human Resources Department's webpage.