



The USATC&FJ Inspector General Update



"First be right, then go forward"

FY24 3rd Quarter

IG Update 24-1: Guidance on Religious Accommodations

Requests for religious accommodation (RA) fall into five major areas:

1. Worship practices.
2. Dietary practices.
3. Medical care (including immunizations).
4. Wear and appearance of the uniform.
5. Personal appearance and grooming practices.

Worship practices

Some religious groups have worship practices that conflict with the Soldier's normal availability for duty; others may require a formal accommodation request

Dietary practices

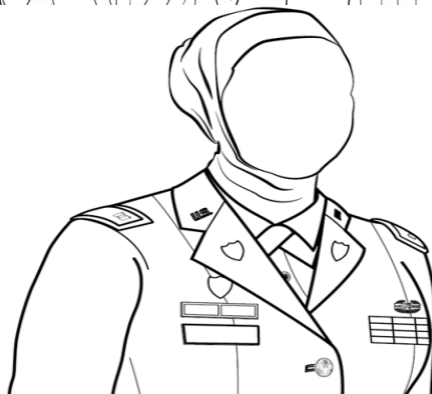
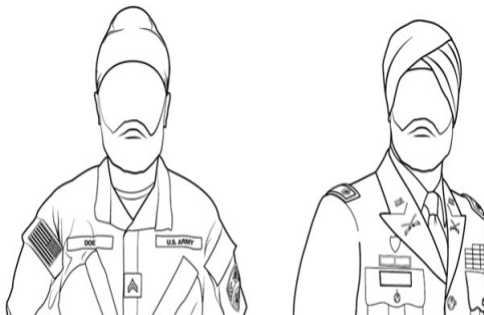
A Soldier with a conflict between the diet provided by the Army and that required by religious practice may also request an exception to policy to ration separately.

Medical care

Accommodations concerning medical care always require coordination between unit commander and appropriate healthcare provider. Unit commanders, in consultation with Military Treatment Facility commanders and/or their assigned medical advisor (that is, brigade surgeon), are the designated decision authority for medical practices which do not involve exemption from immunization. The Surgeon General is the decision authority for immunization exemptions and appeals concerning disapproved religious accommodations for other medical practices.

Wear and appearance of the uniform

Commanders may informally authorize wear of additional or alternative uniform items. Requests to wear apparel that is not authorized by AR 670 – 1 or DA Pam 670 – 1 require a religious accommodation request using the waiver request procedures in appendix P.



Appearance and Grooming

Soldiers must request a religious accommodation to engage in religious appearance and grooming practices, regardless of whether the practice is addressed in AR 670 – 1. Some uniform and grooming requests may be approved or disapproved by the GCMCA. Any request which requires a waiver of Army policy may only be approved or disapproved by the SECARMY or designee.

***Accommodations must be approved before altering any wear and appearance of the uniform or grooming standards.**

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Timelines:

Routine RA requests should be answered in writing by the unit commander within **10 days** of receiving request

GCMCA Timelines The GCMCA must approve (or recommend disapprove) all RA requests with decision sent to requesting Soldier (if approved) or DCS G-1 (if recommending disapproval) **NLT 30 days** after unit receives request from the Soldier

SECARMY Timelines Requests exceeding AR 670-1 must be elevated from the GCMCA to the DCS G-1 for SECARMY consideration

Routine RA requests are those not requiring waiver of Army policy: - Unit commanders can approve or disapprove a RA request for worship and dietary practices, adjustments to work and duty rosters, religious speech and abstentions, dietary practices, meals, separate rations, and some uniform wear. unless it requires a waiver of Army policy. –

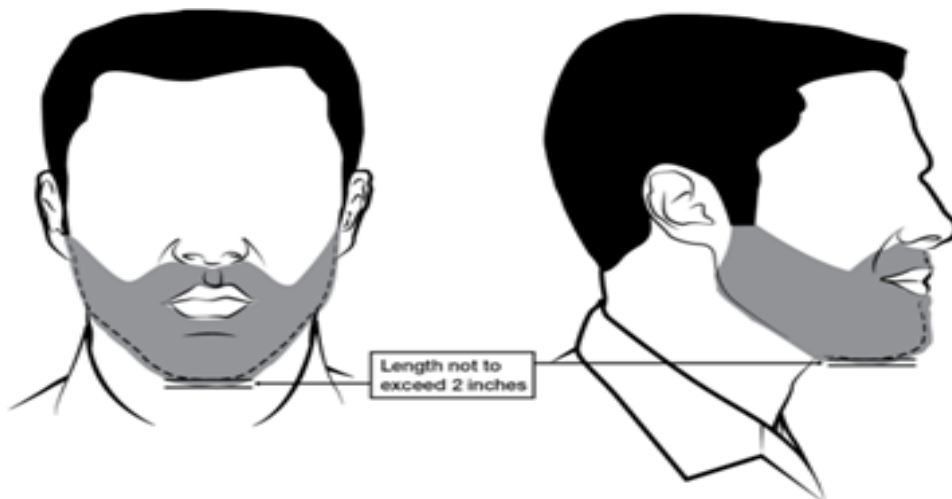
Routine RA requests are temporary and only last during the Soldiers time under that commander, and will need to be renewed on PCS, change of commander.

Requests Requiring Waiver or deviation from Army Policy require GCMCA or higher approval. **Disapproved RA requests can be appealed.** See Appendix P of AR 600-20

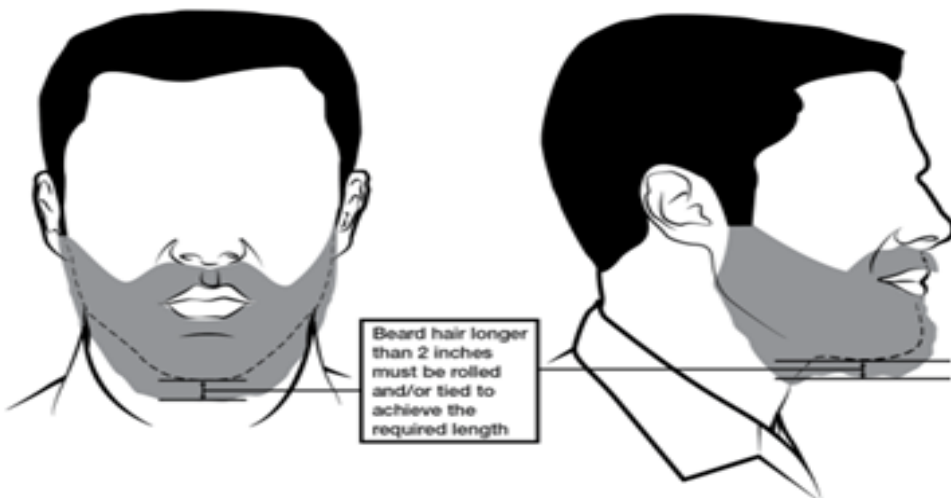
Religious Accommodations packet requirements;

Checklist:

- Soldier Request Memo
- CH Endorsement memo
- Company Commander Endorsement
- BN Commander Endorsement
- BDE Commander Endorsement
- Optional - Include Photos, letters



Beards (including facial hair and neck hair) must be maintained to a length not to exceed **2 inches** when measured from the bottom of the chin. Beard hair longer than **2 inches** must be **rolled and/or tied** to achieve the required length. (See figure to left)



References:

- AR 600-20 (Army Command Policy) para 5/Appendix P (Accommodating Religious Practices)
- AR 670-1 (Wear and Appearance of Army Uniforms and Insignia)
 - Title 10 USC 774, "Religious apparel: wearing while uniform"
 - DODI 1300.17, "Religious Liberty in the Military Services"
 - Title 42 USC 2000bb-1, "Free exercise of religion protected"
 - FM 1-05 (Religious Support)