



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
**U.S. ARMY MANEUVER SUPPORT CENTER OF EXCELLENCE**  
**14000 MSCoE LOOP, SUITE 316**  
**FORT LEONARD WOOD, MISSOURI 65473-8300**

ATZT-PE (600-20f)

21 FEB 2024

**MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION**

**SUBJECT: Memorandum of Instruction (MOI) for Religious Accommodation Requests**

**1. REFERENCES.**

- a. Department of Defense Instruction 1300.17 (Religious Liberty in the Military Services).
- b. Army Regulation 600-20 (Army Command Policy).
- c. Army Regulation 670-1 (Wear and Appearance of Army Uniforms and Insignia).

**2. GENERAL.**

a. Requests for religious accommodation generally fall into five major areas: worship practices, dietary practices, medical care (including immunizations), wear and appearance of the uniform, and personal appearance and grooming practices. Procedures and approval authorities vary depending on the type of accommodation. Some uniform and grooming requests may be approved or disapproved by the General Court Martial Convening Authority (GCMCA). Any request which requires a waiver of Army policy may only be approved or disapproved by the SECARMY or designee.

b. All requests require the use of HQDA, DCS, G-1 approved templates, use of an official workflow, and submission within required timelines. Follow the guidelines and steps in AR 600-20, Chapter 5-6, Appendix P, and visit the Maneuver Support Center of Excellence (MSCoE) G-1 MS Teams Channel (Files) for templates and references. <<https://dod.teams.microsoft.us/l/team/19%3adod%3ab1b0cb35cfc04057873156ab7e6c27e0%40thread.tacv2/conversations?groupId=b630dd39-b1ba-422a-9dc0-8cd43657c4a0&tenantId=fae6d70f-954b-4811-92b6-0530d6f84c43>>.

**3. APPLICABILITY.** This MOI applies to all Soldiers assigned or attached to units on Fort Leonard Wood and are subject to MSCoE GCMCA.

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#### 4. PROCEDURES FOR PROCESSING REQUESTS RELATED TO UNIFORM AND GROOMING.

a. A religious accommodation that follows uniform and grooming standards covered in AR 670-1 para 3-16 (beard, turban, hijab, leggings) will be approved/disapproved by the Fort Leonard Wood (FLW) GCMCA. A waiver for a religious accommodation is a request for anything not covered in AR 670-1 (for example: males requesting uncut hair, religious headgear that does not comply with para 3-15); HQDA, DCS, G-1 is the waiver-decision authority.

(1) Beards, hijabs, and turbans - Commanders at the GCMCA or the first general officer in the chain of command, and above may approve, disapprove, or elevate religious accommodation requests for beards, hijabs, and turbans worn in accordance with the standards provided in AR 670-1 (see table P-1). Requests must be approved or forwarded to the DCS, G-1 with a recommendation for disapproval within 30 calendar days of initial submission. Only the DCS, G-1 or designee may grant a request for extension of these timelines.

(2) Waiver requests - A religious accommodation request which requires a waiver of AR 670-1, or any other Army policy may only be approved or disapproved by the SECARMY or designee. If commanders have any questions about whether a request requires a waiver, they should contact the MSCoE, G-1 POC, Mr. R. Lee Herrera at <rudy.l.herrera.civ@army.mil>, (573) 596-2665. MSCoE G-1 will forward waiver request packets to the DCS, G-1 within 30 days of the initial request.

b. All requests must be in writing and must explain the type of accommodation requested and the religious basis for the request. Other documentation, such as photos of the requested accommodation, copies of religious texts or letters from a religious leader, is optional but may assist commanders evaluating the request. Requestors (other than pre-accession requests) must continue to comply with AR 670-1 standards for non-accommodated Soldiers while the request is pending.

c. Immediate Commanders receiving an initial accommodation will immediately provide the information below to: HQDA, DCS G-1, Command Policy Division, <usarmy.pentagon.hqda-dcs-g-1.mbx.command-policy@mail.mil>, the BN/BDE S-1, and MSCoE G-1, POC, Mr. R. Lee Herrera at <rudy.l.herrera.civ@army.mil>, (573) 596-2665.

- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| (1) Requestors Full Name  | (5) Date the Soldier Initiated the Request |
| (2) Unit (CO/BN/BDE)      | (6) Soldiers DODID                         |
| (3) MOS                   | (7) Type of Accommodation                  |
| (4) Religious Faith Group |  |

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d. The immediate commander will arrange an in-person or telephonic interview between the requestor and the assigned unit chaplain or other chaplain determined by the senior chaplain present. The chaplain must provide a memorandum which summarizes this interview and addresses the religious basis and sincerity of the Soldier's request. The chaplain is not required to recommend approval or disapproval but may do so.

e. The immediate commander will review the chaplain memorandum and complete a recommendation memorandum. An explanation is required if the commander recommends disapproval of the request. The immediate commander will forward the request packet through intermediate commanders to the brigade level commander.

## 5. PROCESSING RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION REQUESTS FOR UNIFORM AND GROOMING.

a. Once all 5 memorandums are complete, the Brigade or Battalion representative will email the complete packet in PDF format to the MSCoE G-1, POC, Mr. R. Lee Herrera at <rudy.l.herrera.civ@army.mil>.

b. The GCMCA will consider every religious accommodation request on a case-by-case basis. When evaluating sincerity, commanders may consider the credibility and demeanor of the applicant and the circumstances of the request. Although a religious practice does not have to be compelled by, or central to, a system of religious belief, commanders may evaluate the Soldier's ability to articulate the religious basis and religious importance of the request.

c. Before acting on a request, MSCoE G1 will follow consistent standards in processing requests and routing these packets through the Global Electronic Approval Routing System (GEARS) to the following:

(1) The Office of the Chief of Chaplains (OCCH) - evaluates the religious basis and sincerity of the request, and to ensure consistency and fairness across the force.

(2) MSCoE SJA – provides a legal review conducted in consultation with the Office of the Judge Advocate General (OTJAG)

(3) SGS reviews packet contents for final review and GCMCA memorandum of decision or recommendation.

(4) MSCoE G1 (GCMCA approval/disapproval) - forwards the decision memorandum and supporting documents directly to the DCS, G-1 (DAPE-MPC) Command Policy Division.

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(5) MSCoE G1 (Waiver) – forwards the recommendation memorandums and supporting documents directly to the DCS, G-1 (DAPE-MPC) Command Policy Division.

(6) DCS, G-1 - uploads a copy of the decision documents to iPERMS for filing in the Soldier's AMHRR and tracks approved religious accommodation waivers to ensure that individuals and commanders are notified of any changes in equipment or policies which may affect accommodations.

(7) Disapprovals by the SECARMY or their designee are final. Subsequent requests will only be considered if based on substantially different grounds or supported by substantially new evidence.

## 6. IMMUNIZATIONS.

a. Immunization requirements for Soldiers are described in AR 40-562. A licensed healthcare provider must counsel the applicant. The healthcare provider should ensure that the applicant is making an informed decision and should address:

(1) Specific information about the diseases concerned.

(2) Specific vaccine information including benefits and risks.

(3) Potential risks of infection incurred by unimmunized individuals.

b. The applicant's immediate commander must counsel the applicant and recommend approval or denial of the exemption request. The commander must counsel that noncompliance with immunization requirements may adversely impact deployability, assignment, or international travel, and that the exemption may be revoked under imminent risk conditions. The commander's recommendation will address the factors of military necessity described in paragraph 5-6a of AR 600-20.

c. Soldiers whose religious practices conflict with immunization requirements may request an exemption through command channels, from company or immediate commander through battalion, brigade, division, and GCMCA commanders to The Surgeon General (TSG). TSG is the only approval or disapproval authority for immunization accommodation requests.

## 7. PROCESSING TIMELINES.

a. Reference Table P-1 of AR 600-20 for the Process for GCMCA uniform and grooming requests and all waiver requests.

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b. Requests must be approved or forwarded to HQDA (if recommending disapproval) within 30 days.

## 8. SUSPENSION PROCEDURES

a. Requests for accommodations consistent with published standards will be approved, unless the commander determines the request is not based on a sincerely held religious belief or the commander identifies a specific hazard resulting from the accommodation not otherwise addressed in policy.

b. When an accommodated Soldier's GCMCA identifies a specific threat to health and safety based on the accommodation (such as threat of exposure to toxic CBRN agents that may merit a heightened protective posture) or the GCMCA identifies an issue of sincerity, the GCMCA, after consultation with the Staff Judge Advocate, will notify the Soldier of the need to suspend the religious accommodation, the basis for the suspension, the date the suspension will likely go into effect, and the Soldier's right to appeal. If the Soldier requests an appeal, the Soldier will have 10 days to submit matters to the Office of the DCS, G – 1 Command Policy Division at <usarmy.pentagon.hqda-dcs-g-1.mbx.command-policy@mail.mil>. The accommodation will not be suspended before decision authority takes action on the appeal.

c. In exigent circumstances involving imminent threat to health and safety, the GCMCA may shorten the time for appeal and may require immediate suspension of the accommodation. The GCMCA will notify the DCS G-1 Command Policy Division of the decision and its basis as soon as possible at <us.army.pentagon.hqda-dcs-g-1.mbx.com-mand-policy@mail.mil>.

d. The GCMCA will reinstate the suspended accommodation when the specific and concrete threat to health and safety as a result of the accommodation no longer exists.

9. SUPERSESSON: This MOI supersedes all previous instructions and is in effect until superseded or rescinded.

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10. The proponent for this memorandum is MSCoE G-1. Point of contact is Mr. Lee Herrera, MSCoE G-1 at <rudy.l.herrera.civ@army.mil> or 573-596-2665.



MARK E. GLASPELL  
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