

Religious Accommodations in the Workplace: Know Your Rights

Results achieved in prior matters are not meant to be a guarantee of success as the facts and legal circumstances vary from matter to matter.

Under federal and state laws, employees have the right to request reasonable accommodations for religious beliefs, practices and observances. A religious accommodation is a change to the work environment or job requirements that allows an employee to practice their sincerely held religious beliefs without undue hardship (substantial increased costs or logistical issues), to the employer.

Accommodations are considered “reasonable” when they do not impose significant difficulty or expense on the employer and do not infringe on the rights or safety of others in the workplace.

Examples of Reasonable Religious Accommodations:

- Flexible Scheduling: Time off for religious holidays, prayers, or Sabbath observance.
- Dress and Grooming: Exceptions to dress codes for religious attire such as headscarves, turbans, yarmulkes, or beards.
- Prayer Breaks: Adjusted break times to allow for daily prayers or religious observance.
- Work Duties: Reassignment or modification of tasks that conflict with religious beliefs (e.g., handling certain products).
- Leave for Religious Events: Unpaid leave or use of vacation time for pilgrimages or religious events.

If you believe you need a religious accommodation, you need to speak to your supervisor or HR representative, and make your request in writing, if possible. You will need to specify the religious practice and the accommodation needed.

Both the employer and employee have to participate in the Interactive Process to explore available options that meet both your religious needs and operational requirements. It is unlawful for an employer retaliate against an employee for requesting a religious accommodation.

If your employer has denied your request for religious accommodation or disciplined you for practicing your faith, you may have legal options. Following the Groff v. DeJoy ruling, employers must meet a higher standard before denying religious accommodations. The employment attorneys at Wilentz, Goldman & Spitzer P.A. can help you protect your rights and your job. **Contact us today for a confidential consultation.**

To speak with an attorney about your legal options, please call: 732-352-9858.