

# Religious Discrimination

[Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#) prohibits employers from discriminating against individuals because of their religion in hiring, firing, and other terms and conditions of employment. Title VII covers employers with 15 or more employees, including state and local governments. It also applies to employment agencies and to labor organizations, as well as to the federal government.

Under Title VII:

- Employers may not treat employees or applicants more or less favorably because of their religious beliefs or practices - except to the extent a religious accommodation is warranted. For example, an employer may not refuse to hire individuals of a certain religion, may not impose stricter promotion requirements for persons of a certain religion, and may not impose more or different work requirements on an employee because of that employee's religious beliefs or practices.
- Employees cannot be forced to participate -- or not participate -- in a religious activity as a condition of employment.
- Employers must reasonably accommodate employees' sincerely held religious practices unless doing so would impose an undue hardship on the employer. A reasonable religious accommodation is any adjustment to the work environment that will allow the employee to practice his religion. An employer might accommodate an employee's religious beliefs or practices by allowing: flexible scheduling, voluntary substitutions or swaps, job reassignments and lateral transfers, modification of grooming requirements and other workplace practices, policies and/or procedures.
- An employer is not required to accommodate an employee's religious beliefs and practices if doing so would impose an undue hardship on the employers' legitimate business interests. An employer can show undue hardship if accommodating an employee's religious practices requires more than ordinary administrative costs, diminishes efficiency in other jobs, infringes on other employees' job rights or benefits, impairs workplace safety, causes co-workers to carry the accommodated employee's share of potentially hazardous or burdensome work, or if the proposed accommodation conflicts with another law or regulation.
- Employers must permit employees to engage in religious expression, unless the religious expression would impose an undue hardship on the employer. Generally, an employer may not place more restrictions on religious expression than on other forms of expression that have a comparable effect on workplace efficiency.
- Employers must take steps to prevent religious harassment of their employees. An employer can reduce the chance that employees will engage unlawful religious harassment by implementing an anti-harassment policy and having an effective procedure for reporting, investigating and correcting harassing conduct.

It is also unlawful to retaliate against an individual for opposing employment practices that discriminate based on religion or for filing a discrimination charge, testifying, or participating in

## Need more information?

The law:

- [Title VII of the Civil Rights Act](#)

The regulations:

- [29 C.F.R Part 1605](#)

Policy documents:

- [Section 12: Religious Discrimination](#)
  - See also: [Questions and Answers: Religious Discrimination in the Workplace](#)
  - See also: [Best Practices for Eradicating Religious Discrimination in the Workplace](#)

We also have information on:

- [Employment Discrimination Based on Religion, Ethnicity, or Country of Origin](#)
- [Questions and Answers About the Workplace Rights of Muslims, Arabs, South Asians, and Sikhs Under the Equal Employment Opportunity Laws](#)
- [Questions and Answers About Employer Responsibilities Concerning the Employment of Muslims, Arabs, South Asians, and Sikhs](#)

## You may also be interested in:

any way in an investigation, proceeding, or litigation under Title VII.

## Statistics

In Fiscal Year 2006, EEOC received 2,541 charges of religious discrimination. EEOC resolved 2,387 religious discrimination charges and recovered \$5.7 million in monetary benefits for charging parties and other aggrieved individuals (not including monetary benefits obtained through litigation).

- [Charge Statistics: Religious Discrimination](#)

- [How to File a Charge of Employment Discrimination](#)
- [Mediation at EEOC](#)
- [Training and Outreach](#)
- [Information for Small Employers](#)

## Have a Question?

Ask us! Contact us by [phone \(toll free\) or email](#), or [check our FAQs](#).

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