



Religious Accommodations for Muslims

Addressing the Religious Needs of Muslims who are Incarcerated

What is Religious Accommodation in Prison?

A religious accommodation is any adjustment to the regular prison/jail environment that ensures inmates and detainees are afforded the opportunity to practice their religion according to their sincerely held religious beliefs. While prisoners and detainees may be deprived of some rights, they are guaranteed their First Amendment right to practice their chosen religion within reasonable parameters.

What/When is Ramadan:

Ramadan is a month in the Islamic calendar when most Muslims observe fasting from dawn to sunset, taking neither food nor water during daylight hours. While the Muslim community is diverse and families observe the traditions in a variety of ways, Ramadan is a special and sacred time for the entire community.

The Islamic calendar is lunar, so Ramadan begins approximately 10–11 days earlier each year on the solar (Gregorian) calendar. A full list of Muslim holidays and observances can be found [here](#).

Accommodations for Muslims during Ramadan

- Prisons and detention centers **must** allow Muslim inmates to fast during Ramadan if they so desire
- To alleviate safety and logistical concerns, prison officials may require Muslims to indicate their desire to fast.
- Prison administrators and staff must ensure that meals are being served at appropriate times because of the stringent timing of the start and end of fasts.
 - The morning meal must be served before dawn and the evening meal must be served at sunset.
 - Inmates who are fasting must be provided with water when they break their fast. ●

Not all Muslims fast during Ramadan. There are certain categories of people who may be exempt from fasting, including the elderly, the sick or those with other medical necessities. However, this decision is personal to the individual and may not be made by prison officials. ● Work schedules or assignments should be adjusted so that fasting inmates are not forced to do

physically exhausting jobs, either indoors or outdoors.

- Program Ramadan-related activities, especially as nightly congregational prayers.

Year-Round Common Religious Accommodations for Muslims:

Dietary Needs: Halal

Muslims may not eat pork or pork byproducts, such as gelatin or fat, and may not consume alcohol or alcohol-based products. Marginal increases in cost do not outweigh a person's right to practice his/her religion.

Daily Prayers

Since Muslims pray five times each day, prisoners may need the flexibility to take a short break for private prayer during the workday.

Along with having a quiet and clean space to pray, Muslims will need a place for ablution-ritual washing

before the prayers.

For Muslims, Fridays are the time for communal prayer; they may need the ability to schedule Friday hours to accommodate attendance.

For More Information

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