



Free Exercise of Religion and Religious Accommodation

Communication Card

Version 3 • 23 Aug 2013

POC: SAF/PAO, Comm 703-695-0640, DSN 225-0640



Guidance

- This communication card is intended for use by commanders, leaders, and supervisors.

Talking Points

- Mutual respect is an essential part of the Air Force culture.
- Leaders must ensure their words and actions cannot reasonably be construed to be officially endorsing or disapproving of any faith, belief, or absence of belief.
- The Air Force is dedicated to creating an environment in which people can realize their highest potential without any consideration of one's personal religious or other beliefs.
- The Air Force thoroughly reviews all instances when the Air Force's neutrality toward religion is questioned.
- Voluntary discussions of religion are permissible, even if conducted in uniform, where it is reasonably clear that the discussions are personal, not official, and they are free of coercion or the appearance of coercion.
- The Air Force Chaplain Corps exists to provide spiritual care and ensure all Airmen and their families have opportunities to exercise their constitutional right to the free exercise of religion. They also advise Air Force leaders on matters related to religious, spiritual, ethical, moral, and morale concerns and advocate for the religious and spiritual needs of Airmen and their families.

Resources

- Chaplain and Chaplain Assistants at the Wing, MAJCOM, and Air Force Levels.

Excerpts from AFI 1-1: Air Force Standards

- Leaders at all levels must support the Constitutional right of all Airmen to freely exercise their religion or other personal beliefs while also prohibiting against the formation of an institutional religion or belief.
- Our core values demand that Airmen treat others with genuine dignity, fairness, and respect at all times. Each Airman is entitled to fair, scrupulous, and unbiased treatment.
- Commanders must promote a climate where requests for religious accommodation are welcome and fairly considered.
- Airmen are free to exercise their Constitutional right to practice their religion -- in a manner that is respectful of other individuals' rights to follow their own belief systems; and in ways that are conducive to good order and discipline; and that do not detract from accomplishing the military mission.
- Airmen must also maintain loyalty to the Air Force's core values and standards and maintain professionalism and respect for others regardless of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, or sexual orientation.
- Airmen do not tolerate bullying, hazing, or any instance where an Airman inflicts any form of physical or psychological abuse that degrades, insults, dehumanizes, or injures another Airman (unless it is part of an approved formal training program). It is the obligation of each Airman in the chain of command to prevent such conduct.