



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
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SECNAVINST 1730.7C

N097

FEB 21 2006

SECNAV INSTRUCTION 1730.7C

From: Secretary of the Navy

Subj: RELIGIOUS MINISTRY WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

Ref: (a) Title 10, United States Code
(b) U.S. Navy Regulations, 1990
(c) DoD Directive 1304.19 of 11 Jun 2004
(d) DoD Instruction 1304.28 of 11 Jun 2004
(e) DoD Directive 5120.8 of 20 Mar 1995
(f) Manual for Courts-Martial, United States 2005
(g) DoD Directive 1300.17 of 3 Feb 1988
(h) DoD Directive 7000.14-R, Vol. 7A
(i) DoD Directive 5154.24 of 28 Oct 1986

Encl: (1) Definitions
(2) Confidential Communication to Chaplains and Religious Program Specialists
(3) Accommodation of Religious Practices

1. Purpose. To implement policy and procedures for religious ministry and the accommodation of religious practices in the Department of the Navy. This instruction has been administratively revised and should be reviewed in its entirety.

2. Cancellation. SECNAVINST 1730.7B and SECNAVINST 1730.8A.

3. Scope. This instruction applies throughout the Department of the Navy (DON), including the Coast Guard when operating as a service in the Navy under Title 14, U.S. Code, Section 3.

4. Definitions. Enclosure (1) contains definitions of terms used in this instruction.

5. Organization and Role of Chaplain Corps

a. The Chief of Chaplains of the Navy is appointed in accordance with section 5142 of reference (a) and serves in the grade of rear admiral (upper half) as principal advisor, community leader, and sponsor on matters concerning Chaplain

Corps (CHC) officers and Religious Program Specialists (RP) per Article 1009 of reference (b). As Director of Religious Ministry for the DON, the Chief of Chaplains:

(1) Advises the Secretary of the Navy on all matters pertaining to the free exercise of religion within the naval service. The Chief of Chaplains shall provide regular and frequent advice on:

(a) Religious, ethical, spiritual, and moral implications of all DON policies and actions.

(b) Religious faith-group policies and positions affecting the DON.

(c) All matters pertaining to the organization and utilization of the CHC as a staff corps of the Navy.

(d) All matters pertaining to the organization and utilization of RPs.

(e) Policy formulation and oversight pertaining to the implementation of religious ministry plans, programs, personnel, and facilities.

(2) Advises the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) on all matters pertaining to the free exercise of religion within the Navy, serves as community leader for the Chaplain Corps and Religious Program Specialists, and otherwise assists the CNO. In this capacity, the Chief of Chaplains:

(a) Directs CHC officers, RPs, and all other designated persons engaged in religious ministry within the Navy, the USMC, and other governmental agencies receiving religious ministry from Navy chaplains.

(b) Serves as program sponsor for the professional development, education, and training of CHC officers and RPs.

(c) Provides technical advice for the acquisition, operation, and maintenance of religious ministry support facilities, collateral equipment, and other logistical support both ashore and afloat.

(d) Reports to and is supported by the Chief of Naval Personnel with respect to all duties pertaining to the

procurement, distribution, and support of CHC officers and RP personnel.

(3) Serves on the Armed Forces Chaplains Board (AFCB) per reference (e). As a member of the AFCB, the Chief of Chaplains represents the Secretary of the Navy to:

(a) The Department of Defense (DoD).

(b) The Chiefs of Chaplains/Chaplain Services of other DoD components.

(c) The nation's religious organizations.

(4) Advises the Commandant of the Coast Guard on religious ministry matters relative to the use of Navy chaplains in the Coast Guard.

b. The Deputy Chief of Chaplains is an officer selected by a board to the billet, from officers of the Chaplain Corps, who serves in the grade of rear admiral (lower half) and performs such duties as prescribed by the Secretary of the Navy and law. The Deputy Chief of Chaplains:

(1) Serves as principal assistant to the Chief of Chaplains and Deputy Director for Religious Ministry for the DON.

(2) Serves as Chaplain of the Marine Corps, advising the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC) on religious ministry matters in reference to support, plans, programs, policy, personnel, and facilities within the USMC.

(3) In accordance with reference (e), serves as a member of the AFCB.

c. The Deputy Chief of Chaplains for Reserve Matters is an officer selected by a board to the billet, from reserve officers of the Chaplain Corps, who serves in the grade of rear admiral (lower half), in the reserve component, and performs such duties as prescribed by the Secretary of the Navy and law. The Deputy Chief of Chaplains for Reserve Matters:

(1) Serves as the principal assistant to the Chief of Chaplains for Reserve Matters.

(2) Advises the Chief of Chaplains on religious ministry

matters in reference to administration, supervision, training, and mobilization of chaplains and Religious Program Specialists in the Reserve component.

d. Chaplains

(1) Chaplains are Qualified Religious Ministry Professionals (RMPs) endorsed by a Department of Defense (DoD)-listed Religious Organization (RO) and commissioned as CHC officers.

(2) As a condition of appointment, every RMP must be willing to function in a pluralistic environment in the military, where diverse religious traditions exist side-by-side with tolerance and respect. Every RMP must be willing to support directly and indirectly the free exercise of religion by all military members of the DON, their family members, and other persons authorized to be served, in cooperation with other chaplains and RMPs. Chaplains are trained to minister within the specialized demands of the military environment without compromising the tenets of their own religious tradition.

(3) In providing religious ministry, chaplains shall strive to avoid the establishment of religion to ensure that free exercise rights are protected for all authorized personnel.

(4) Chaplains will provide ministry to those of their own faith, facilitate ministry to those of other faiths, and care for all service members, including those who claim no religious faith. Chaplains shall respect the rights of others to their own religious beliefs, including the right to hold no beliefs.

(5) Chaplains advise commands in matters of morale, morals, ethics, and spiritual well-being. They also serve as the principal advisors to commanders for all issues regarding the impact of religion on military operations.

(6) Chaplains are non-combatants. Chaplains are not authorized to obtain weapons qualifications, warfare qualifications, or bear arms; however, chaplains who attained weapons or warfare qualifications during prior service as a combatant are authorized to wear their awards and/or warfare qualifications. Chaplains are eligible to qualify for and to wear the insignia of qualification designations such as Fleet Marine Force, Basic Parachutist, and Navy/Marine Parachutist.

6. Responsibilities of Commanders

a. Commanders shall provide a Command Religious Program (CRP) in support of religious needs and preferences of the members of their commands, eligible family members and other authorized personnel. The CRP is supported with appropriated funds at a level consistent with other personnel programs within DON.

b. Chaplains will not be compelled to participate in religious activities inconsistent with their beliefs.

c. Commanders retain the responsibility to provide guidance for all command functions. In planning command functions, commanders shall determine whether a religious element is appropriate. In considering the appropriateness for including a religious element, commanders, with appropriate advice from a chaplain, should assess the setting and context of the function; the diversity of faith that may be represented among the participants; and whether the function is mandatory for all hands. Other than Divine/Religious Services, religious elements for a command function, absent extraordinary circumstances, should be non-sectarian in nature. Neither the participation of a chaplain, nor the inclusion of a religious element, in and of themselves, renders a command function a Divine Service or public worship. Once a commander determines a religious element is appropriate, the chaplain may choose to participate based on his or her faith constraints. If the chaplain chooses not to participate, he or she may do so with no adverse consequences. Anyone accepting a commander's invitation to provide religious elements at a command function is accountable for following the commander's guidance.

d. Commanders shall, when in a combat area, only assign, detail, or permit chaplains, as non-combatants under the Geneva Convention, to perform such duties as are related to religious ministry under Art. 1063 of reference (b).

e. Commanders shall not assign chaplains collateral duties that violate the religious practices of the chaplain's religious organization or that require services in a capacity in which the chaplain may later be called upon to reveal privileged or sensitive information.

f. Commanders shall not assign chaplains duties to act as director, solicitor, or treasurer of funds, other than administrator of a Religious Offering Fund; or serve on a court-martial; or stand watches other than that of duty chaplain.

7. Confidential Communication to Chaplains and Religious Program Specialists. Enclosure (2), hereby incorporated by reference, sets forth DON policy on confidential communication to chaplains and RPs.

8. Accommodation of Religious Practices. Enclosure (3), hereby incorporated by reference, sets forth DON policy on accommodation of religious practices.

9. Responsibilities

a. The CNO shall exercise oversight to ensure compliance with this instruction and shall implement the policy in this instruction throughout the Navy. The CNO shall initiate action with the Commandant of the Coast Guard and the Administrator of the Maritime Administration to implement this policy when Navy Chaplains provide religious ministry to those agencies.

b. The CMC shall issue orders to implement this instruction throughout the Marine Corps.



Donald C. Winter
Secretary of the Navy

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DEFINITIONS

1. Command Religious Program (CRP). The comprehensive program of Religious Ministry that is planned, programmed, budgeted, and implemented to meet identified Religious Ministry requirements of a command.
2. Contract Religious Ministry Professional. A civilian RMP endorsed by a specific DoD-listed RO and contracted on a non-personal services basis using competitive procedures. These RMPs provide religious ministries for members of the military, their dependents, and other authorized persons of the contract RMP's religious organization. Commands shall assign a contracting officer's technical representative (COTR) to monitor contract RMP performance.
3. Divine Services. A term of art used in Section 6031 of reference (a) and Article 0817 of reference (b) to refer to public worship and religious services conducted afloat, in the field, or on military bases and installations by a military chaplain. Under reference (a), Commanders "shall cause divine services to be performed" and a chaplain has the right to conduct divine services "according to the manner and forms" of his or her religious organization. Divine Services are command functions, which take place according to the manner and forms of religious organizations. Participation in Divine Services shall be voluntary, with the exception of personnel present in an official support capacity.
4. Ecclesiastical Endorsing Agent. An individual authorized by an RO to provide or withdraw ecclesiastical endorsements on its behalf. Each RO is limited to a single Ecclesiastical Endorsing Agent. Policy regarding their visits to commands is provided in reference (d).
5. Public Worship. A term of art used in section 6031 of reference (a) that consists of Divine Services and Religious Services exclusively. Command functions, other than Divine/Religious Services, that include religious elements do not constitute public worship.
6. Religious Elements. Includes prayers, invocations, reflections, meditations, benedictions, or other religious or faith-based features traditionally or customarily incorporated in command functions other than Divine or Religious Services.

7. Religious Ministry. The entire spectrum of professional duties performed by Navy chaplains, Religious Program Specialists (RPs), and designated personnel; to include providing for and/or facilitating required religious needs and practices.

8. Religious Ministry Professional (RMP). An individual endorsed by a DoD-listed RO, per reference (d), to represent the organization and to conduct its religious observances or ceremonies. An RMP is a fully qualified member of the clergy for those religious organizations that have a tradition of professional clergy or their equivalents.

9. Religious Organization - Under reference (d), an entity that is organized and functions primarily to perform religious ministries to a non-military lay constituency and that has met the religious purposes test of Section 501(c)(3) of Title 26, U.S. Code [2000], and holds current status as a Section 501(c)(3) Schedule "A" organization. Religious Organizations possess ecclesiastical authority to endorse and withdraw endorsement for Religious Ministry Professionals serving under their authority.

10. Religious Program Specialists (RP). RPs support chaplains in the planning, programming, administration, and coordination of the CRP. RPs are combatants who provide force protection and physical security for chaplains in operational environments.

11. Religious Services. Worship events conducted in the manner and forms of Religious Organizations and led by Lay Leaders, Contract Civilian Religious Ministry Professionals, or other authorized personnel. Participation in Religious Services shall be voluntary, with the exception of personnel present in a support capacity.

CONFIDENTIAL COMMUNICATION TO CHAPLAINS
AND RELIGIOUS PROGRAM SPECIALISTS

1. Discussion. The unconstrained ability to discuss personal matters in complete privacy encourages full and complete disclosure by personnel and family members seeking chaplain assistance. Such disclosure establishes a sacred trust, facilitates increased morale and mission readiness, and benefits both the individual and the institution. The DON benefits from having personnel and family members who trust chaplains. The institution profits from the pastoral care given to its people. Pastoral care can only be done properly under the protection of confidential communications.

2. Definitions

a. Confidential Communication

(1) Confidential communication includes acts of religion, matters of conscience, and any other information conveyed to a chaplain in the chaplain's capacity as a spiritual adviser or to an RP in the RP's official capacity and is not intended to be disclosed to third persons other than those to whom disclosure is in furtherance of the purpose of the communication or to those reasonably necessary for the transmission of the communication.

(2) The confidential relationship extends beyond the end of the counseling relationship and beyond the death of the person making the disclosure.

(3) Confidential communication can be conveyed through oral or written means, including, but not limited to, letters and electronic media.

(4) All chaplains and RPs have the professional obligation to keep private all confidential communication disclosed to them in their official capacities, intended to be held in confidence, and made as an act of religion or a matter of conscience.

(5) Confidential communications can be made only to chaplains or RPs in their support role. Communication with Lay Leaders, Directors of Religious Education, and other support personnel are not confidential and are not included in this policy. Lay Leaders, Directors of Religious Education, and support personnel who inadvertently become aware of confidential

communications must keep such matters confidential, and immediately refer the matter to a chaplain.

b. Privileged Communications. Privileged communications, a subset of confidential communications, is a legal term of art. The scope of the clergy-penitent privilege is defined in Military Rule of Evidence (MRE) 503 in reference (f).

3. Policy

a. The term "confidential communications" includes the legal recognition of the clergy-penitent privilege, all communications between uniformed chaplains and those who confide in them as an act of religion, a matter of conscience, or in their capacity as spiritual advisors. Commanders and chaplains are required to honor the confidential relationship between service personnel and military chaplains. This protection and obligation extends to military chaplains. This protection and obligation extends to RPs acting in their supporting role.

b. The unique role of military chaplains includes a sacred trust of maintaining absolute confidentiality. Therefore, chaplains and RPs are bound by this inviolable trust. Neither the holding of additional professional credentials, nor requirements imposed by state law, relieve the chaplain of this responsibility. Any authorized person who has access to a military chaplain or RP is covered by this policy.

c. In all relationships, including counseling and advisory, chaplains will inform all parties, including counselees and commanders, of the ramifications of this policy on confidentiality and privileged communication. Counselees have the right to make decisions pertaining to disclosure, free from coercion. If a chaplain recommends a referral to another agency, the chaplain will inform the counselee s/he may not have the same degree of confidentiality as with the chaplain.

d. Referrals. Consultation with and referral to another chaplain is permissible only with the written consent of the counselee.

e. Multiple Counselees. When multiple counselees (e.g., marriage and family) are parties to the same counseling session, chaplains will preserve confidentiality unless all parties consent to disclosure.

f. Conscientious Objection. Conscientious objection assessment interviews directed by the Commanding Officer, are administrative functions, not counseling relationships. Therefore, they are not confidential communications and the interviewee shall be so informed. A chaplain who has a prior existing counseling relationship with a service member requesting designation as a conscientious objector shall not be appointed to evaluate that service member.

g. Supervisory Role. Chaplains may have responsibilities that involve administrative and disciplinary action with those whom they supervise. To safeguard confidential and privileged communication, chaplains in supervisory roles are to avoid entering into such communications with personnel they supervise. At the onset of the supervisory relationship, supervisors will inform those they supervise of these limitations on pastoral relationships. Personnel under the supervision of a chaplain are encouraged to make their confidential communication to a chaplain outside their chain of command.

h. Counseling Records. Records or notes compiled by a chaplain in his/her counseling duties are "work product" and considered confidential. As such, chaplains must secure any such records, in whatever medium or format, containing confidential communication. When no longer needed, they will be destroyed. When current or former counselees are referenced in consultation, supervision, or education, their identities must be thoroughly protected.

i. Subpoena of Records. If a subpoena or other demand for documents or media containing confidential communication is received, the chaplain or a representative will immediately contact, at a minimum, the servicing legal office, the chain of command, and the Chief of Chaplains.

4. Responsibilities

a. The Chief of Naval Operations and the Commandant of the Marine Corps shall implement the policies in this enclosure.

b. The Chief of Chaplains shall ensure that training occurs at entry level and periodically thereafter. Such training will enable chaplains to:

(1) Regularly brief their command structure on the ramifications of this policy.

(2) Train personnel under their supervision including those not bound by this policy (such as volunteers, contractors, etc.).

c. Commanders are required to honor the confidential relationship between service personnel and military chaplains. Commanders shall:

(1) Not penalize a chaplain or RP for abiding within the parameters of this policy.

(2) Upon the death of a chaplain, appoint only a chaplain to review the decedent's files and destroy any confidential communications.

5. Action. Actions inconsistent with this policy may result in administrative or disciplinary action. Consequences may include, but are not limited to, loss of chaplain or RP credentials, and/or action under applicable provisions of the Uniform Code of Military Justice or the Military Personnel Manual.

ACCOMMODATION OF RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

1. Purpose. To provide policy and guidance for the accommodation of religious practices within the DON under reference (g).
2. Applicability. The policies and procedures in this instruction apply solely to the accommodation of religious practices within the DON and no other context.
3. Definitions
 - a. Department of the Navy. The DON, for purposes of this enclosure, includes applicants for entry to and members of the Navy, Navy Reserve, Marine Corps, Marine Corps Reserve, as well as midshipmen at the U.S. Naval Academy and Reserve Officer Training Corps, and officers and officer candidates in all officer accession programs.
 - b. Religious Observance. Religious observances include participating in worship services and following other doctrinal requirements on Sabbath and holy days.
 - c. Religious Dietary Observances. Religious dietary observances include doctrinal or traditional requirements on types of foodstuffs or the means of preparation.
 - d. Religious Apparel. Religious apparel is defined as articles of clothing worn as part of the doctrinal or traditional observance of the religious faith practiced by the service member. Hair and grooming practices required or observed by religious groups are not included within the meaning of religious apparel.
 - e. Religious Medical Practices. Religious medical practices include doctrinal or traditional objections to receiving immunizations and providing Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) specimen samples.
4. Policy. DON policy is to accommodate the doctrinal or traditional observances of the religious faith practiced by individual members when these doctrines or observances will not have an adverse impact on military readiness, individual or unit readiness, unit cohesion, health, safety, discipline, or mission accomplishment.

a. Accommodation of a member's religious practices cannot be guaranteed at all times but must depend on military necessity. Determination of necessity rests entirely with the commanding officer.

b. The guidelines in this instruction shall be used in the exercise of command discretion concerning the accommodation of religious practices. Nothing in these guidelines, except as expressly provided herein, shall be interpreted to require a specific form of accommodation in individual circumstances.

5. Religious observances shall be accommodated, except by reason of necessity, as provided in reference (b). Except by reason of necessity commanders should avoid scheduling conflicts with major religious observances.

6. Dietary Observance. Commanders normally accommodate religious dietary requirements through subsistence in kind. Subsistence in kind includes serving of appropriate meals or issuing of Meals Ready to Eat, Religious, specifically designed to meet religious requirements. Commanders may authorize separate rations within the guidelines of reference (h). In acting on requests for separate rations, the religious doctrines and traditions of the member's religious faith should be considered on the same basis as other personal reasons for separate rations. To the extent that health, safety, or readiness in the unit is not compromised, commanding officers may authorize individuals to provide their own supplemental food rations at sea or in the field environment to accommodate the doctrinal or traditional observances of their religious faith.

7. Immunizations. Immunization requirements may be waived when requested by the member based on the doctrinal or traditional practices of the religious faith practiced by the service member.

a. The religious objection of the service member must be balanced against the medical risk to the member and the military unit, and military requirements such as alert status, deployment potential, and availability of the member for reassignment to units requiring full medical readiness. To provide for consistent application of these guidelines, immunization waivers will be decided by the Surgeon General of the Navy or headquarters level designee. Individual requests shall be submitted to Chief, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (MEDCOM-24), via the commanding officer and Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) (N1/NT) or Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC) (DCS (M&RA)), as appropriate.

b. Commanding officers may subsequently revoke waivers for service members at imminent risk of disease due to exposure or to conform to international health regulations incident to foreign travel or unit deployment. The guidance in paragraph 11.b on irresolvable differences must be considered in such circumstances.

8. Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) Specimen Sampling

a. Requests for waiver of the DNA specimen sample requirement will be decided by CNO (N1/NT) or CMC (DCS (M&RA)). Individual requests shall be submitted to CNO (N1/NT) or CMC (DCS (M&RA)), as appropriate, via the commanding officer.

b. When determining whether to grant a request for waiver on religious grounds, the five factors contained in paragraph 11.a as supplemented by the following shall be considered:

(1) DNA analysis fulfills the military requirement of quickly and accurately identifying the remains of service members under reference (i). DNA analysis is not conducted on the specimen unless necessary for identification of remains or for other narrowly defined purposes. The specimen sample will be destroyed at the request of the member upon completion of service.

(2) Regarding the cumulative impact of repeated accommodations of a similar nature and previous treatment of similar requests, consider whether granting an accommodation sets a precedent that could adversely impact on other Department of Defense medical policies and programs, including mandatory pre-deployment processing, medical screening activities, HIV testing and medical surveillance program serum collection.

9. Uniforms

a. Religious items or articles not visible or otherwise apparent may be worn with the uniform, provided they do not interfere with the performance of the member's military duties or interfere with the proper wearing of any authorized article of the uniform.

b. Visible items of religious apparel may be authorized for wear with the uniform, except when the item is not neat and conservative, its wearing will interfere with the performance of the member's military duties or is specifically prohibited in

subparagraphs 10d and 10e. In the context of the wearing of a military uniform, "neat and conservative" items or religious apparel are those that:

- (1) Are discreet, tidy, and not dissonant or showy in style, size, design, brightness or color.
- (2) Do not replace or interfere with the proper wearing of any authorized article of the uniform.
- (3) Are not temporarily or permanently affixed or appended to any article of the uniform.

c. The standards in subparagraph 10b, and the prohibitions in subparagraphs 10d and 10e, are intended to serve as a basis for determining a service member's entitlement to wear religious apparel with the uniform. For example, unless prohibited by subparagraph 10d or 10e, religious headgear of a style and size that can be completely covered by standard military headgear may be worn with the uniform whenever a military cap, hat, or other headgear is not prescribed. It may also be worn underneath military headgear as long as it does not interfere with the proper wearing, functioning, or appearance of the prescribed headgear.

d. Whether an item of a religious apparel interferes with the performance of the service member's military duties depends on the characteristics of the item, the circumstances of its intended wear, and the particular nature of the member's duties. Factors in determining if an item of religious apparel interferes with the military duties include, but are not limited to, whether the item may;

- (1) Impair the safe and effective operation of weapons, military equipment, or machinery.
- (2) Pose a health or safety hazard to the wearer or others.
- (3) Interfere with the wearing or proper functioning of special or protective clothing or equipment (e.g., helmets, flak jackets, flight suits, camouflage uniforms, gas masks, wet suits, and crash and rescue equipment).
- (4) Otherwise impair the accomplishment of the military mission.

e. Visible items of religious apparel shall not be worn while wearing historical or ceremonial uniforms; participating in review formations, parades, honor or color guards and similar ceremonial details and functions.

f. Jewelry bearing religious inscriptions or otherwise indicating affiliation or belief may be worn subject to the same uniform regulations prescribed for jewelry that is not of a religious nature.

g. Chaplains may wear any religious apparel required by their religious organizations with the uniform while conducting worship services and during the performance of rites and rituals distinct to their faith groups.

h. Service members may wear any required religious apparel distinct to their faith group with the uniform while in attendance at organized worship services.

i. To ensure consistency of application, the CNO and CMC may authorize visible items of religious apparel, within the guidelines in this instruction. This authority may be delegated within their headquarters staffs. Requests to authorize a type of religious apparel not previously authorized shall be submitted to service headquarters for approval under procedures specified by CNO or CMC. CNO and CMC will provide an information copy of the approval or denial to the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) (ASN (M&RA)).

j. Subject to the guidelines in subparagraph 4d, and the limitations in subparagraphs 10b, 10d, 10e and 10i, commanding officers may approve individual requests for wearing authorized visible religious apparel with the uniform. In any case in which a commanding officer denies a request to wear an item of religious apparel with the uniform, the member shall be advised of the right to request a review of that refusal by CNO or CMC, as appropriate, via the chain of command. When such review is requested, the review shall occur within 30 days following the date of request for cases arising in the United States, and within 60 days for all other cases. Exceptions to these deadlines shall be limited to unusual circumstances. Visible items of religious apparel may not be worn with the uniform until approved.

10. Responsibilities

a. Commanders will respond to requests for accommodation in a just and timely manner, supporting religious freedom and

respect for religious diversity within the Sea Services.

b. Commanders and commanding officers may approve requests for religious accommodation within the guidelines of this instruction. To promote standard procedures for resolving difficult questions involving accommodation of religious practices, commanding officers shall consider the following factors:

(1) The importance of military requirements, including individual readiness, unit readiness, unit cohesion, health, safety, morale, and discipline.

(2) The religious importance of the accommodation to the requester.

(3) The cumulative impact of repeated accommodations of a similar nature.

(4) Alternative means available to meet the required accommodation.

(5) Previous treatment of the same or similar requests, including treatment of similar requests made for other than religious reasons.

c. When requests are precluded by military necessity, commanders should seek reasonable alternatives.

d. When requests for accommodation are not in the best interests of the unit but continued tension between the unit's requirements and the individual's religious beliefs is apparent, administrative action is authorized, but not limited to:

(1) Reassignment, reclassification or separation consistent with Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) and Service regulations.

(2) Nothing in this instruction precludes action under the Uniform Code of Military Justice in appropriate circumstances.

11. Information and Education

a. The CNO and CMC shall provide DON policy on accommodation of individual religious practices and military requirements in paragraphs 5 and 5a of this enclosure to

applications for commissioning, enlistment and reenlistment, and shall require the member's signature acknowledging the DON policy.

b. The CNO and CMC shall incorporate relevant materials on religious traditions, practices, policies, this instruction, and reference (a), in curricula for command, judge advocate, chaplain and similar courses of instruction and orientations.

12. Action

a. ASN (M&RA) is responsible for overall policy control and program execution.

b. The CNO and CMC shall implement the policies and procedures in this enclosure.

c. The CNO and CMC shall revise Service regulations governing uniforms, food service, separate rations, immunizations, and DNA sampling to conform to this instruction within 90 days from the date of this instruction. Provide copies of each such regulation revision to ASN (M&RA).