



Regional Transit Authority

Religious Accommodation

(HC43)

POLICY STATEMENT

The New Orleans Regional Transit Authority (RTA) is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of religion or any other basis protected by federal or state law. It is RTA's policy to make a good faith effort to reasonably accommodate job applicants', candidates' and employees' sincerely held religious beliefs, practices, and observances, unless the accommodation would pose an undue hardship for RTA.

PURPOSE

This policy establishes standards and procedures for responding to requests for religious accommodation from job applicants, candidates and employees.

APPLICATION

This policy applies to all RTA job applicants, candidates and employees. If a conflict occurs between this policy and a collective bargaining agreement, the collective bargaining agreement will prevail.

APPROVED:

ADOPTED: Board Chair

Chief Executive Officer

Effective Date: _____

Date of Last Review: _____



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1.0 PROCEDURES

RTA will consider requests for reasonable accommodation from job applicants, candidates and employees (requesting individuals) in accordance with the procedures outlined below. *

* There is a different set of religious accommodation procedures that apply to job applicants and employees in the following job classifications: Bus Operator Trainee, Part-time Bus Operator and Full-time Bus Operator. These procedures are explained in the Addendum to this policy (Attachment 1).

1.1 Initiating a Request for Religious Accommodation

1.1.1 Job Applicants and Candidates

A. The Human Capital Department (HC) notifies applicants invited to participate in any given selection process of the opportunity to request an accommodation in advance of the testing process.

B. Job applicants and candidates are responsible for requesting a religious accommodation during the selection process. The Human Capital Department (HC) Coordinator is responsible for the selection process and will work with the applicant to determine a reasonable accommodation.

C. If a candidate needs a religious accommodation relating to an offered position, he/she is responsible for informing the HC Coordinator of the need for accommodation at the time of the conditional offer of employment.

1.1.1.2 HC Coordinator's Responsibility

When the HC Coordinator receives a verbal or written request for religious accommodation from an applicant or candidate, the HC Coordinator will provide the individual a copy of RTA's Religious Accommodation Policy and a Request for Religious Accommodation for Job Applicants form (Attachment 1) for completion and submittal.

1.1.2 Employees

To request a religious accommodation for the employee's current position, the employee should:

A. Obtain a Request for Religious Accommodation for Current Employees form (Attachment 2), which includes a copy of this policy from HC.

B. Complete and submit the request form to the Chief Human Resources Officer and/or the employee's immediate supervisor. If the request is for time off to observe a religious holiday, it must be made at least 30 days in advance of the holiday. This is necessary so a religious accommodation can be attempted which will not unduly disrupt RTA operations.



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1.3 Evaluation of Requests for Religious Accommodation

Upon receipt of a completed Request for Religious Accommodation form, the immediate supervisor or HC Coordinator will forward a copy of the request with supporting documents to the Chief Human Resources Officer for evaluation.

The Chief Human Resources Officer evaluates all requests for religious accommodation, and will obtain any additional information as needed. Requests will not be processed until the request form, required documents, and any additional requested information are received and reviewed by the Chief Human Resources Officer. The requesting individual is responsible for reasonably cooperating with RTA's accommodation efforts.

1.4 Approval/Denial of Requests for Religious Accommodation

The Chief Human Resources Officer and respective Department Chief, when applicable, are responsible for approving or denying all requests for religious accommodation.

The Department Chief will:

- meet with the employee and initiate an Agency-wide search for a work schedule that will accommodate the employee's religious obligation; and
- confer with the bargaining unit of the employee if he/she is represented by a union, to seek a flexible solution to any collective bargaining agreement term which may create an impediment to finding an accommodation, and document those discussions.

If no accommodation can be found in the employee's job classification, the Chief Human Resources Officer will commence an interactive process with the employee to determine if there are alternative, vacant positions outside of the employee's job classification for which the employee qualifies. All requesting individuals will be notified in writing of the results of their requests.

1.4.1 Approval

If the Request for Religious Accommodation is from a job applicant, the responsible HC Coordinator will notify the applicant that the accommodation has been approved and will ensure that the accommodation is implemented in the selection process.

If the request is from a candidate or current employee, Chief Human Resources Officer, Human Capital, will notify the selected applicant, explaining how and when the accommodation will be implemented.

1.4.1.1 Accommodation Rejected by the Requesting Individual

If the requesting individual rejects the offered accommodation, he/she may discuss an alternative accommodation differing from the original request. The request for an



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alternative accommodation will be evaluated in the same manner as the original request.

1.4.2 Denial

If the requesting individuals request for religious accommodation is denied in total or in part, the Chief Human Resources Officer will notify him/her in writing, explaining the reason(s) for the denial.

- If a job applicant or candidate wishes to 'appeal the denial, he or she may do so by writing a letter of complaint to the Chief Human Resources Officer.
- If an employee wishes to appeal the denial, he/she may file a grievance under the Grievance (HC13) policy, and submit it to the Chief Human Resources Officer, Human Capital.

All requests for Religious Accommodation, along with a copy of the denial letters will be forwarded to the Human Capital Coordinator, Civil Rights.

1.5 Changes to an Employee's Job Assignment

An employee's approved religious accommodation request will be valid only while the employee remains in the job assignment for which the request was approved. A different job assignment requires a new request for religious accommodation.

1.6 Maintenance of Requests for Religious Accommodation

If a request for religious accommodation relates to the selection process or was requested by a candidate who declined the position, the HC Coordinator will file all documents related to the request in the Employment Selection File.

If the religious accommodation was requested by a candidate who accepted the position, or from a current employee, all related documents will be filed in both the employee's department Personnel File and his/her centralized Personnel File in HC.

2.0 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Job Applicant/Candidate – Any individual who is seeking consideration for a RTA job by way of new hire, rehire, promotion, lateral transfer, or voluntary demotion. A job applicant has not completed the employment process making him/her eligible for hire; a job candidate has gone through the process and is eligible for hire.

Religious Accommodation – Reasonable modifications or adjustments to working conditions that remove conflicts between the employee's working conditions and the employee's religious obligations, and does not cause undue hardship to RTA.



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Religious Holiday – A day that a Bus Operator's religion precludes him/her from working.

Religious Unpaid Leave Status – A period of time during which a Bus Operator will not work for RTA, and will not be paid by RTA, because no Suitable Assignment is available.

Undue Hardship – Where accommodation of an employee's religious obligations requires excess administrative costs, diminishes efficiency of operations, 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.

3.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

Job Applicants/Candidates are responsible for completing Requests for Religious Accommodation and cooperating with RTA staff during the reasonable accommodation process.

Department Chief is responsible for reviewing and approving or denying requests for religious accommodation in conjunction with the Chief Human Resources Officer.

Chief Human Resources Officer will serve as RTA's Religious Accommodation Administrator and has overall responsibility for enforcing the provisions of the Religious Accommodation Policy and for reviewing and approving or denying all requests for religious accommodation.

Employees are responsible for requesting and completing Requests for Religious Accommodation and cooperating with RTA staff during the reasonable accommodation process.

Human Capital Coordinator, Labor Relations is responsible for responding to complaints and grievances regarding requests for religious accommodation.

Human Capital Coordinators are responsible for processing requests for religious accommodation from job applicants and candidates.

4.0 FLOWCHART

Not Applicable

5.0 REFERENCES

- EEO Statement of Policy (HC4)



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- Grievance Process (HC13)

6.0 ATTACHMENTS

1. Request for Religious Accommodation form - Job Applicants
2. Request for Religious Accommodation form - Current Employees
3. Specification of Religious Obligations for Bus Operators

7.0 PROCEDURE HISTORY

8.0 SPONSOR DEPARTMENT

Human Capital

NEW ORLEANS REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY
**REQUEST OF RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION
 FOR JOB APPLICANTS**
(CONFIDENTIAL)

To be completed by Job Applicant
 Please print:

Name:		Telephone Number (work):	
Job and Bulletin # applying for:		Telephone Number (home):	

1. Describe specifically any religious obligations you have which may interfere with your ability to participate in the selection process for the position you have applied for, or which may interfere with your work requirements, if you have been offered a position with RTA.

2. Describe the religious accommodation that you are requesting.

3. Provide the name and address of the religious institution where you observe/participate in religious practices or services (e.g., church, synagogue) as well as the name and phone number of the person in charge of that institution.

4. Attach documentation supporting your request for religious accommodation (i.e., letter from religious advisor).



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Job Applicant - Please forward your request to the Human Capital Coordinator responsible for the examination which you have requested an accommodation.

**Send to: RTA Human Capital Department
2817 Canal St
New Orleans, LA 70119
ATTN: Human Capital Department**

I certify that the information provided above is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand that providing false information on this form subjects me to disqualification from the selection process for this position.

Requestor's Signature:		Date:	
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To be completed by the Chief Human Resources Officer and Department Chief, if applicable.

1. Request for Accommodation:

Approved: <input type="checkbox"/>	Signature of CHRO		Date	
Approved: <input type="checkbox"/>	Signature of Dept. Chief		Date	
Denied: <input type="checkbox"/>	Signature of CHRO		Date	
Denied: <input type="checkbox"/>	Signature of Dept. Chief		Date	
Recommend Alternative Accommodation: <input type="checkbox"/>	Signature of CHRO		Date	
Recommend Alternative Accommodation: <input type="checkbox"/>	Signature of Dept. Chief		Date	

If request denied, what is the reason?

- Undue hardship
- Threat to health & safety
- Other

Describe reason(s)

If request approved, describe the specific accommodation(s) to be provided.

If recommend different accommodation from that requested, describe the specific accommodation(s) to be provided and why.



NEW ORLEANS REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY
REQUEST OF RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION
FOR CURRENT EMPLOYEES
(CONFIDENTIAL)

To be completed by Current Employees
Please print:

Table with 4 columns and 3 rows containing fields: Name, Telephone Number, Job Title, Department Name/#, Work Shift Days/Hour, Name of Supervisor.

1. Describe specifically any religious obligations you have which may interfere with your work requirements. If relating to your work schedule, include in your description any specific dates, days and/or times your religious obligations preclude you from working.

Horizontal lines for writing response to question 1.

2. Describe the religious accommodation that you are requesting.

Horizontal lines for writing response to question 2.

3. Provide the name and address of the religious institution where you observe/participate in religious practices or services (e.g., church, synagogue) as well as the name and phone number of the person in charge of that institution.

Horizontal lines for writing response to question 3.

4. Attach documentation supporting your request for religious accommodation (i.e., letter from religious advisor).



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Please forward your request to your immediate supervisor or the Director of Human Resources/Religious Accommodation Administrator.

**Send to: RTA Human Capital Department
2817 Canal St
New Orleans, LA 70119
ATTN: Human Capital Department**

I certify that the information provided above is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand that providing false information on this form subjects me to employee discipline by the RTA, up to and including termination. Additionally, I understand that it is my responsibility to complete a form with updated information should the date(s) of my religious obligations or nature of my obligations change from year to year, and that failure to submit another form may result in the denial of future accommodations.

Employee's Signature		Date:	
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To be completed by the Chief Human Resources Officer and Department Chief, if applicable.

1. Request for Accommodation:

Approved: <input type="checkbox"/>	Signature of CHRO	Date
Approved: <input type="checkbox"/>	Signature of Dept. Chief	Date
Denied: <input type="checkbox"/>	Signature of CHRO	Date
Denied: <input type="checkbox"/>	Signature of Dept. Chief	Date
Recommend Alternative Accommodation: <input type="checkbox"/>	Signature of CHRO	Date
Recommend Alternative Accommodation: <input type="checkbox"/>	Signature of Dept. Chief	Date

If request denied, what is the reason?

- Undue hardship
- Threat to health & safety
- Other

Describe reason(s)

If request approved, describe the specific accommodation(s) to be provided.

If recommend different accommodation from that requested, describe the specific accommodation(s) to be provided and why.

NEW ORLEANS REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY (RTA)

SPECIFICATION OF RELIGIOUS OBLIGATIONS FOR BUS OPERATORS

The New Orleans Regional Transit Authority (RTA) has a policy under which Bus Operators in RTA's Operations may be eligible, in certain circumstances, for a religious accommodation with respect to their schedules. It is important that all Bus Operators requesting an accommodation fully understand the details of the policy. A copy of RTA's Religious Accommodation Policy should have been provided with this form. If you did not receive one, or would like further information, please contact the Chief Humans Resources Officer, Human Capital.

A Bus Operator seeking an accommodation must fill out this form in its entirety and return a copy of it both to the Chief Human Resources Officer and to the Bus Operator's Manager. Filling out this form does not guarantee that an accommodation can be made. Accommodations will be made only in accordance with the written policy, which takes into account several important factors, including among others, seniority and scheduling needs. The information provided on this form is subject to verification. Bus Operators providing false information on this form are subject to discipline, including termination. Questions regarding the information requested on this form should be directed to the Chief Human Resources Officer, Human Capital.

Name _____ Badge No _____ Division _____

1. Describe specifically any religious obligation(s) you have which may interfere with your work schedule or other work requirements.

2. Describe the religious accommodation you are requesting. NOTE: If you intend to observe a religious holiday, you must notify your manager at least 30 days in advance of the holiday.

3. Provide the name and address of the religious institution where you observe/participate in religious practices or services (e.g. church, synagogue) as well as the name and phone number of the person in charge of that institution.

4. Attach documentation of days/times that you observe/participate in religious practices or services (e.g., church bulletin or religious institutions statement of belief or doctrine, letter from a religious advisor, etc.)

I certify that the information provided above is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand that providing false information on this form subjects me to employee discipline by RTA, up to and including termination. Additionally, I understand that it is my responsibility to complete a form with updated information should the date(s) my religious obligations preclude me from working change from year to year, and that failure to submit another form may result in the denial of future accommodations.

Signature _____ Date _____

