

	<b>State of Alaska</b> <b>Department of Corrections</b> <b>Policies and Procedures</b>	<b>Index #:</b> 816.01	<b>Page 1 of 6</b>	
		<b>Effective:</b> 8/20/2014	<b>Reviewed:</b>	
		<b>Distribution:</b> Public	<b>Due for Rev:</b>	8/2018
	<b>Chapter:</b>	Chaplaincy Programming		
<b>Subject:</b>	Faith-based Programming and Chaplaincy Services			

I. Authority

In accordance with AS 44.28.030 and 22 AAC 05.155, the Department of Corrections shall develop and adopt policies and procedures that are consistent with laws for the guidance, government and administration of correctional facilities, programs and field services.

II. References

AS 33.30.011

AS 33.30.021

III. Purpose

To establish guidelines and consistent standards for the administration of faith-based programming and chaplaincy services.

IV. Application

All prisoners, staff, and faith-based volunteers.

V. Definitions

As used in this document, the following definitions shall apply:

- A. Faith-Based Program: A program which addresses a prisoner's social, emotional, spiritual or other life experiences from a faith or spiritual perspective.
- B. Faith Group Activities: Activities that occur with two or more prisoners gathered for the purpose of undertaking an approved, scheduled activity related to the observance of a faith group.
- C. Faith Practice (personal): Activity by a prisoner that is undertaken alone and is related to the observance of a faith group.
- D. Faith Property: Items defined by faith group tenets for personal observance within a faith system that are permitted within the constraints of secure confinement.
- E. Holy Day Observance: A faith-based set-aside of a single day, or group of days, for the practice of the tenets of a faith group.
- F. Proselytize: Using any form of coercion, real or implied, to compel or unduly persuade others to attend services, programs or special activities that are religious in nature or to make individuals follow a particular religion because its value is seen as significantly greater, more important, and more rewarding than the faith commitment, or lack thereof, currently held by another.
- G. Recognized Faith Group: Any faith group supported by written documentation that has defined faith principles and practices that has been approved by the Chaplaincy Coordinator.
- I. Chaplaincy Coordinator: An employee who is responsible for the planning, implementation, administration and evaluation of Department of Corrections' chaplaincy services and faith-based programs provided in correctional facilities and community residential centers. The Chaplaincy Coordinator is responsible for the screening, orientation and supervision of institutional chaplains, volunteer clergy and lay persons.

- J. Institutional Chaplain: An employee or faith group volunteer endorsed by a recognized faith group and approved to work within secure areas.
- K. Faith Group Volunteer: An individual who assists in facilitating institutional religious practices without compensation which includes Religious Volunteers, Lay Leaders, and Clergy Volunteers.

VI. Policy

It is the policy of the Department to allow prisoners to participate in faith-based programs and practices consistent with facility security and available resources.

VII. Procedures

A. Faith Practices

1. Prisoners shall designate their faith group affiliation within thirty days of admission to a facility by submitting a written request to their institutional probation officer. This designation shall be recorded in ACOMS and shall remain in effect for six months at which time the prisoner may elect to complete another written designation to change their faith-group designation. A prisoner may elect to change their religious designation by submitting a written request to their institutional probation officer.
2. Prisoners who select a recognized faith group shall be allowed to practice that faith consistent with the guidelines provided by the Chaplaincy Coordinator including services, property, special events and special dietary needs for that faith group. Prisoners may request recognition of a faith group not included in the Chaplaincy Coordinator's guidelines pursuant to Section VII(A)(3) by submitting documentation from the faith group which specifies the beliefs and practices of that faith group.
3. A prisoner who desires to participate in any faith practice which is not addressed in the guidelines provided by the Chaplaincy Coordinator shall follow the procedures below to request the accommodation of this request:
  - a. The prisoner shall complete the Religious Accommodation Request Form (Form 816.01A) and submit this form to the Institutional Chaplain or Superintendent's designee if the facility does not have a chaplain.
  - b. If the form is not completed with sufficient specificity, the Institutional Chaplain or Superintendent's designee, shall require the prisoner to resubmit the request with more information.
  - c. The Institutional Chaplain or Superintendent's designee shall discuss the request with the Chaplaincy Coordinator to determine whether the requested accommodation is made pursuant to a sincerely held religious belief.
  - d. The Institutional Chaplain or Superintendent's designee shall discuss the request with the security sergeant or other appropriate institutional staff to determine whether the requested accommodation presents security, administrative or resource allocation issues.
  - e. The Institutional Chaplain or Superintendent's designee shall submit a written response to the prisoner on the Religious Accommodation Request Form (Form 816.01A) granting or denying the accommodation. A denial of the accommodation shall state the specific reason for the denial.
  - f. If a request for an accommodation is denied, the Institutional Chaplain or Superintendent's designee shall direct the prisoner to provide a written



- in a secure storage area, a determination shall be made as to when the prisoner may access this property and how the property may be used.
- b. Prisoners shall be allowed to possess and wear head coverings and other religious attire consistent with the listing for a recognized faith group contained in the guidelines provided by the Chaplaincy Coordinator with the exception of head coverings or attire that may undermine safety and security as determined by the Superintendent. Approved head coverings may be worn throughout the institution but shall be subject to search under normal security procedures. Head coverings and religious attire must be purchased from an approved vendor. Prisoners shall follow the procedures set forth in Section VII(A)(3) of this policy to request headgear which is in excess of that listed in the guidelines provided by the Chaplaincy Coordinator.
  - c. Prisoners shall be allowed to possess and wear one faith medallion or pendent or medicine bag which must be worn under the clothing and suspended from an approved chain or strap pursuant to Policy & Procedure 811.05 [Prisoner Personal Property].
  - d. Prisoners may possess personal copies of religious books and periodicals consistent with Policy & Procedure 811.05 [Prisoner Personal Property] and which are obtained through direct order from an approved vendor or from an approved donation from an approved source. Hardcover books are not allowed unless approved by the Superintendent.
  - e. Group faith property shall be stored in a secure area and the Superintendent shall develop procedures to control when and how this property may be used.
  - f. The Department is not responsible for the procurement of any faith group property or equipment. All faith group property or equipment must be approved using the procedures in Section VII(A)(3) of this policy.
  - g. Faith group property may be donated for use in the institution by an approved faith group organization using the procedures in Section VII(A)(3) of this policy. Faith group property may not be donated by prisoners unless authorized by the Superintendent.
  - h. Searches of group or personal faith property may be conducted with or without the prisoner being present. Prisoners shall open and present all faith property for inspection when requested and refusal may result in disciplinary action including confiscation of the property.
  - i. Prisoners shall not be allowed to possess faith property or written materials which contain prohibited content under Policy & Procedure 810.03, Prisoner Mail or Policy & Procedure 811.05, Prisoner Personal Property.
6. Prisoners shall request accommodation for special faith group related activities such as holy days and shall follow the procedures set forth in Section VII(A)(3) of this policy to request these accommodation of their group or individual faith related events.
- a. Any use of altar wine at a faith group related event must be approved by the Superintendent after consultation with the Institutional Chaplain or Chaplaincy Coordinator under the procedures in Section VII(A)(3) of this policy and shall only be consumed by the clergy member who is conducting the activity. The use of a non-alcoholic substitute for altar wine must be considered.

- b. Prisoners must obtain permission to miss institutional work or programs to attend a faith group activity. Any absence from work will be without pay.
    - c. Department staff shall be allowed to attend and observe any faith group activity.
  7. Prisoners shall request accommodation for special faith related diets using the procedures set forth in Section VII(A)(3) of this policy.
- B. The Chaplaincy Coordinator, Institutional Chaplains and Faith Group Volunteers shall be subject to all administrative regulations, Department Policies and Procedures and facility Standard Operating Procedures.
  1. The Chaplaincy Coordinator shall maintain a list of approved faith groups and faith group guidelines which shall be used by Institutional Chaplains to evaluate requests for accommodation under Section VII(A)(3) of this policy. These guidelines shall include a description of the basic tenets of an approved faith group and a listing of approved faith group activities and property.
  2. When requested by the Superintendent, or their designee, the Chaplaincy Coordinator or Institutional Chaplains shall notify a prisoner's designated contact person of the prisoner's death.
  3. When requested by the Superintendent, or their or designee, the Chaplaincy Coordinator or Institutional Chaplain shall notify a prisoner of the death, serious illness or injury of a family member or members.
  4. Institutional Chaplains and Faith Group Volunteers shall have physical access to areas of the institution as necessary to minister to prisoners and as approved by the Superintendent or designee.
  5. Institutional Chaplains shall serve without prejudice and be available to all prisoners regardless of faith-group affiliation.
  6. Institutional Chaplains are subject to Policy & Procedure 202.01, Code of Ethical and Professional Conduct, and Policy & Procedure 202.15, Standards of Conduct.
  7. Communication between Institutional Chaplains and Faith Group Volunteers and prisoners is privileged and subject to confidentiality, however a communication must be shared with the Superintendent or security staff if it contains information of a threat to institutional or public safety or the orderly operation of the institution.
- C. The Superintendent shall develop Standard Operating Procedures as necessary to implement this policy consistent with the operations of that facility.

#### VIII. Implementation

This policy and procedure is effective as of the date signed by the Commissioner. Each Superintendent or Manager shall incorporate the contents of this document into local policy and procedure within 14 days. All local policies and procedures must conform to the contents of this document.

8/20/2014

Date

SIGNATURE ON FILE

Joseph D. Schmidt, Commissioner  
Department of Corrections

Forms applicable to this policy:

816.01A: Religious Accommodation Request Form

*Original: 2/18/1985 [Religious Services]*

*Revised 8/28/1995 [Religion Program]*

*Revised 6/28/2013 [Faith-based Programming & Chaplaincy Services]*