5-13/100.00 Religious Programs

Religious Vetting Procedures

Inmates interested in participating in religious programming or services will be required to interview with a representative from the Office of Religious and Volunteer Services (RVS). Religious programming and/or services which require vetting consist of: religious diets, religious headwear, and other associated religious garments, when applicable. After receiving a request for religious programming and/or services, RVS will direct a chaplain or designee of corresponding faith to conduct an interview with the inmate. This interview consists of a conversation to determine the sincerity of the inmate's religious belief. If an appropriate chaplain cannot be identified, the request will be processed directly through RVS. RVS will temporarily authorize the program and/or issue the requested item or meal until a chaplain or designee is available to conduct the inmate interview.

Inmates receiving medical diet meals will not be precluded from participating in religious diet programming. For more information regarding religious diets and headwear, refer to sections 5-13/010.10, "Special Diets," and 5-13/100.05, "Handling of Religious Headwear and Articles," of the Custody Division Manual (CDM).

Religious Services

Each facility shall:

- Create a master schedule for the purpose of providing religious programs to all inmates who wish to participate
- Arrange a scheduled time period to permit inmates to worship or meditate that does not conflict with general facility operations
- Provide access to appropriate facilities for worship or meditation
- Refer private clergymen wishing to counsel inmates to RVS
- Permit religious literature and publications acceptable through the U.S. Mail, subject to the provisions of CDM section 5-06/030.00, "Inmate Reading Material"
- Not preclude attendance by an inmate solely based on a mental health diagnosis or prescription for medication

Religious Candles

Use of open flame religious candles within custody facilities on special occasions may be granted by the facility unit commander. The unit commander (or their designee), may authorize by whom, how, and where open flame candles may be used. Unit commanders shall ensure the use of ceremonial open flame candles do not impact the safety and security of their facility.

If permission is granted by the unit commander, the following procedures shall be adhered to:

- Under no circumstance shall an inmate possess or have control over candles, candle holders, incense, lighters, matches, or any open flame device used during group religious services or activities
- All above mentioned items shall be inventoried by custody personnel prior to entry and exiting to account for all items

- There shall be direct supervision by custody personnel whenever an open flame device is used
- When approved for use, candles should only be allowed to remain lit for the shortest period of time necessary to complete the religious ceremony
- Candles shall not be left unattended
- A fire extinguisher must be immediately available during the ceremony. All candles must be lit by the person officiating the religious ceremony and under direct supervision of custody personnel
- If there is not sufficient custody personnel to provide direct supervision, authorization shall not be given.

Due to inmate classification and safety concerns the following facilities shall not use open flame candles:

- Inmate Reception Center (IRC)
- Correctional Treatment Center (CTC)
- Pitchess Detention Center - South Facility
- Los Angeles County + University of Southern California Medical Center (LCMC)