

South Carolina Human Affairs Commission

Technical Services and Training Division



Prevention Corner



An ounce of Prevention is Worth a Pound of Cure.

~ Benjamin Franklin

November 2025

**South Carolina
Human Affairs
Commission**
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<https://schac.sc.gov/>

The South Carolina Human Affairs Commission was created by the General Assembly in 1972 to encourage fair treatment, eliminate and prevent unlawful discrimination, and foster mutual understanding and respect among all people in this state.



Accommodating Religion in the Workplace

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits employers from discriminating against individuals because of their religion or lack of religious belief in hiring, firing, or any other terms and conditions of employment.

Employers are prohibited from treating an applicant or employee differently, or less favorably, because the individual holds or does not hold a particular religious belief.



Are all religious beliefs covered by the laws enforced by the EEOC?

The laws enforced by EEOC protect all sincerely held religious beliefs. Religion protections include beliefs of traditional organized religion, such as Buddhism, Christianity, and Judaism; and, religious beliefs that are new, uncommon, or not part of a formal church or sect.

What are some common religious practices that may require a workplace change?

- Observance of Sabbath or religious holiday
- Need for prayer break during work hours
- Practice of following strict or particular dietary requirements
- Practice of not working during a mourning period for a deceased relative
- Practices relating to dress and/or personal grooming

These are only a few examples of religious practices.

Source: [Fact Sheet: Religious Discrimination | U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#); [Religious Discrimination | U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#); [Religious Discrimination - FAQs | U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#)

NOTES FROM THE U.S. EEOC

Reasonable Accommodation

The law requires an employer or other covered entity to **reasonably accommodate** an employee's religious beliefs or practices, unless doing so would cause an undue hardship on the operations of the employer's business.



Reasonable adjustments to the work environment that would allow an employee to practice his or her religion could include the following:

- Flexible work schedule
- Voluntary shift substitutions or swaps
- Job reassignments
- Modifications to workplace policies or practices (exceptions to dress or grooming rules)

Undue Hardship

An employer does not have to accommodate an employee's religious beliefs or practices if doing so would cause **undue hardship** to the employer (which depends on individual circumstances). An accommodation may cause undue hardship if it is costly, compromises workplace safety, decreases workplace efficiency, infringes on the rights of other employees, or requires other employees to do more than their share of potentially hazardous or burdensome work.

Employment Policies/Practices: Forced Religious Observance

An employee **cannot be forced to participate** (or not participate) in a religious activity as a condition of employment or continued employment.

Religious Harassment

- Subjected to unwelcome religious harassment
- Harassment is based on religion
- Harassment so severe and pervasive that reasonably interferes with work performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment
- The employer may be held liable for the harassment

Source: [Fact Sheet: Religious Discrimination | U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#); [Religious Discrimination | U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#)

U.S. Department of Justice

News & Notes



Press Release

February 15, 2023

Justice Department Secures Settlement in Religious Discrimination Suit Against Lansing, Michigan

Michigan – The Justice Department announced on February 15, 2023, that it entered a consent decree with the City of Lansing, Michigan, that resolved the department's religious accommodation and retaliation lawsuit.

- The lawsuit alleged that the city violated Title VII when it terminated a Seventh-day Adventist employee and former detention officer with the city's police department.
- The department's amended complaint alleges that, on her first day of work, the employee informed the city that she could not work a shift from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday because she observed the Sabbath as a Seventh-day Adventist.
- The amended complaint alleges that the employee also informed the city of her religious observance during the application process.
- The department's complaint asserted that instead of adequately attempting to reasonably accommodate employee's religious observance, which Title VII requires, the city terminated her employment.
- The amended complaint further alleges the city retaliated against the employee by filing a counterclaim against her because she intervened in the United States' lawsuit.

Title VII is a federal statute that prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex and religion. Title VII also prohibits retaliation against employees who have made a charge, assisted or participated in an investigation, proceeding or hearing under Title VII.

Read the entire article at: [Office of Public Affairs | Justice Department Secures Settlement in Religious Discrimination Suit Against Lansing, Michigan | United States Department of Justice](#)

**If you feel like you have experienced discrimination,
contact us for help.**

(803) 737-7800 or (800) 521-0725, Relay 711 (for TTY users)

How can I schedule training?

email: training@schac.sc.gov



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<https://schac.sc.gov/>

The mission of the South Carolina Human Affairs Commission is to prevent and eliminate unlawful discrimination in Employment, Housing, and Public Accommodations.