

205 – Religious Accommodation

Section 205.01 Background

Fort Bend County respects the religious beliefs and practices of all employees and applicants for employment, and will make, upon written request, an accommodation for such observances when a reasonable accommodation is available that does not create an undue hardship on the County’s activities or delivery of services to the public.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits employers from discriminating in hiring, firing, and other terms, conditions, and practices of employment against employees or applicants for employment because of the religious beliefs of the employee or applicant. Further, Title VII requires that employers reasonably accommodate the religious beliefs or practices of employees or applicants unless doing so would impose an undue hardship on the employer.

Section 205.02 Requesting Religious Accommodation

An employee who finds that his/her religious beliefs or practices conflict with Fort Bend County policies and practices regarding dress, appearance, grooming, schedules, duties, or other aspects of employment, may seek to find a resolution to the conflict by submitting a written request. The employee should offer a suggested accommodation(s) that would help the employee fulfill the essential functions of the job in a manner that does not conflict with the employee’s sincerely held religious beliefs. It is recommended that Form 205A is used for this purpose. The form should be submitted to the Department Head or Elected Official of the employee’s department or office, or other individual designated by the Department Head or Elected Official to accept such requests.

An applicant for employment may be asked to submit a written request for accommodation at any point in the hiring process that it becomes known a conflict may exist.

Section 205.03 Religious Accommodation and the Interactive Process

Upon receipt of a request for religious accommodation from an employee, the Department Head, Elected Official, or designee, should evaluate what accommodation(s) might be available to assist the employee. Consultation with Human Resources and/or the County Attorney’s Office is encouraged.

All requests for religious accommodation should be considered on the specific facts and circumstances of the request on a case by case basis. An interactive dialogue between the employee and the Department Head, Elected Official, or designee, in consultation with Human Resources and the County Attorney’s

Office, should be undertaken to determine if a reasonable accommodation exists. The Department Head, Elected Official, or designee, should respond to the employee in writing, preferably on Form 205A, to document the outcome of the interactive process.

**Section 205.04
Disputes Regarding
Reasonable
Accommodation for
Religious Purposes**

An employee who has a complaint regarding the manner in which his/her request for accommodation was handled or the outcome of the interactive process, may seek to resolve this dispute as directed in *Policy 203, Dispute Resolution*.

Policy Approved and Adopted By:
Fort Bend County Commissioners Court
January 28, 2020¹

¹ Effective September 25, 2018, the content formerly found in Section 205: Workplace Harassment and Violence Protection was incorporated into Section 202: Respectful Workplace: Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Harassment Prevention, and into Section 601: Violence Prevention. On January 28, 2020, the Religious Accommodation Policy was approved and adopted.