

Command Chaplain Letter/USNA Religious Accommodation Questionnaire

Congratulations on Your Appointment to the United States Naval Academy!

Our Religious Ministry Team, comprised of Navy Chaplains, Petty Officers, and civilian staff, stands ready to support you as you begin this new chapter. It is our privilege to serve and enrich the lives of Midshipmen during Plebe Summer and throughout your time here.

Each battalion is assigned a chaplain dedicated to fostering the spiritual readiness and moral development of the Midshipmen in their care. Your chaplain will be a consistent and encouraging presence throughout your training.

Chaplains serve all individuals of every faith tradition, as well as those who claim no faith at all. We offer confidential counseling, crisis support, and moral guidance. Chaplains also conduct religious services consistent with their own faith traditions. If a chaplain from your specific faith group is not available, we will make every reasonable effort to facilitate opportunities for you to observe and practice your faith.

To support certain sincerely held religious beliefs or observances, you may need to complete a religious accommodation interview with a chaplain. Department of the Navy policy is to accommodate religious practices whenever possible, unless doing so would adversely affect mission readiness, unit cohesion, safety, or good order and discipline. In some cases, commanders may recommend an alternative accommodation.

If you have questions regarding a religious accommodation request, please do not hesitate to contact us prior to Induction Day. We are here to provide guidance and assistance as you prepare for this important milestone.

Faithfully yours,

Robert D. Johnson
Command Chaplain

Request for Religious Accommodation:

In accordance with SECNAVINST 1730.8, it is Department of the Navy (DON) policy to accommodate the doctrinal or traditional observances of Service Members when such accommodation will not adversely affect mission accomplishment, military readiness, unit cohesion, good order and discipline, health, or safety. Religious accommodation requests are considered on a case-by-case basis and may be approved when they do not conflict with mission requirements and safety. Approval authority rests with the Commanding Officer or appropriate authority as designated by policy. Accommodation is not automatic; and may be approved when they do not conflict with mission requirements and safety and per policy, remains subject to military necessity.

Chaplains provide advisory assessment of religious sincerity and doctrinal basis.

During Induction Day, the Chaplain Center will record Religious Preferences and Religious Accommodation Requests. Examples of religious accommodation requests include, but are not limited to:

- **Religious Dietary Observances** - Doctrinal or traditional requirements on types of foodstuffs allowed or the means of food preparation
 - **Religious Observance** - Participating in worship services and following other doctrinal requirements on Sabbath and holy days
 - **Religious Apparel** - Articles of clothing worn as part of the doctrinal or traditional observance of the religious faith practiced by the service member
 - **Religious Medical Practices** - Doctrinal or traditional objections to receiving immunizations and providing DNA specimen samples (vaccines)
- As stated, most religious accommodation requests will be recorded during I-Day. However, in order to ensure your dietary needs are addressed from your first meal at USNA, we ask that you fill out the form attached and return it to the USNA Chaplain Center.

USNA RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete the Questionnaire if you have dietary restrictions/needs and/or are requesting religious accommodations.

*Examples of RA requests include but are not limited to religious observances, vaccines, grooming, etc.

Please scan and email to: religious-exemption-group@usna.edu.

Name: _____

Date: _____

1) Do you have any dietary restrictions or needs? (circle one)

YES

NO

a) If YES, please explain:

2) Are these needs related to religious or faith-based observances? (circle one)

YES

NO

a) If YES, please explain:

3) Do you intend to submit a Religious Accommodation Request (other than dietary)?

(circle one)

YES

NO

a) A few examples might include: beard exception due to religion or belief, head coverings, or other clothing

b) If YES, please explain:

4) Thank you for your response. We look forward to seeing you in June!