

Request for COVID-19 Vaccine Exception for Religious Reasons/Religious Accommodation

As a result of the current and ongoing nationwide public health emergency and to promote the health and safety of the Federal workforce, Executive Order 14043 mandates Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) vaccination for all Federal employees, subject to exceptions as required by law. The Department of the Navy (DON) has a duty to provide and maintain a workplace that is free of known hazards, and the vaccination requirement will help to slow the spread of COVID-19 and assist in the prevention of infection.

The DON is also committed to providing equal employment opportunities (EEO) without regard to any protected status and a work environment that is free of unlawful harassment, discrimination, and retaliation. As such, the DON is committed to complying with all laws protecting employees' religious beliefs, practices, and observances under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. When requested, the DON will provide an exception/religious accommodation for an employee's sincerely held religious beliefs, or practices and observances, that prohibit the employee from receiving a COVID-19 vaccine, provided the requested religious accommodation is reasonable and does not create an undue hardship for the DON. To be eligible for a possible exception, you must first establish that your refusal to be vaccinated is based upon a sincere belief that is religious in nature.

Philosophical, political, scientific, or sociological objections to immunization do not justify granting an exception or religious accommodation. An objection due to a personal preference is not a "religious belief" protected by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. A request for an accommodation may not be granted if it is not reasonable, or if it creates an undue hardship. Even if an exception to the vaccination requirement is approved, an employee may still be required to wear a face mask, practice social distancing, and/or provide COVID-19 test results according to DON requirements and guidelines.

To request an exception/religious accommodation related to the DON COVID-19 vaccination policy, please complete this document and return it to your Supervisor. This information will be used by your Supervisor, your servicing EEO office, Office of General Counsel, Human Resources Office, or other appropriate personnel to determine eligibility and potentially engage in the interactive discussion with you in the search for an effective religious accommodation. In order to qualify for the exception, employees are required to provide a written and signed statement below objecting to the COVID-19 vaccination due to a sincerely held religious belief that prohibits immunization, in which case supporting documentation may be required.

Completing this document constitutes a declaration that the information you provide is, to the best of your knowledge and ability, true and correct. Any intentional misrepresentation to the Federal Government may result in legal consequences, including removal or termination from Federal Service. Failure to provide information needed for the processing of the religious accommodation request will impact the DON's ability to adequately understand the nature of your request, which can lead to denial of the religious accommodation request. Once the DON has enough information to make a determination, you will be notified as to the approval or denial of your request for exception/religious accommodation.

Please provide full and complete responses to all of the below questions. Please provide as much supporting documentation as you feel will be helpful to the DON in considering your request.

- 1) In your own words, please explain below why you are requesting a religious exception/religious accommodation to the COVID-19 vaccination requirement.

- 2) Name the religion and/or describe the religious principles that guide your objection to immunization.

- 3) How long have you held the belief underlying your objection? Please use length of time for your response using the number of months and/or years.

- 4) Do you have a religious objection to all immunizations?
 - a. If the answer is “no,” please explain why your objection is limited to particular vaccines.

- 5) As an adult, have you ever received any vaccines against any other diseases (such as an influenza vaccine or a tetanus vaccine)?
 - a. If the answer is “yes,” what vaccine have you most recently received and when, to the best of your recollection?

- 6) If there are any other medicines or products that you do not use because of the religious belief underlying your objection, please identify them.

- 7) Do you have any documentation to substantiate the fact that you are unable to be vaccinated due to a religious belief, observance, or practice? Please note that supporting materials may be requested during the processing of your religious accommodation request.

- 8) Please provide any additional information that you think may be helpful in reviewing your request.

Acknowledgement

I verify that the information I am submitting in support of my request for an accommodation is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Employee Name: _____ Date of Request: _____

Employee Signature: _____

This information is being collected in order to comply with Executive Order 14043, Requiring Coronavirus Disease 2019 Vaccination for Federal Employees (September 9, 2021). The information is maintained, used, and protected in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974, and the applicable systems of records associated with this collection. Applicable Systems of Records Notices (SORN) include DPR 39 DoD, DoD Personnel Accountability and Assessment System (March 26, 2020; 85 FR 17047); OPM/GOVT-10, Employee Medical File System Records (June 21, 2010); and EEOC/GOVT-1, Equal Employment Opportunity in the Federal Government Complaint and Appeal Records (July 30, 2002, 67 FR 49338; Modified November 17, 2016, 81 FR 81116).