



8A Inspector General Newsletter

“Strength through Standards and Discipline” Volume X, Issue 10



Guidance on Religious Accommodations Process

Requests for religious accommodation (RA) fall into five major areas:

1. Worship practices.
2. Dietary practices.
3. Medical care (including immunizations).
4. Wear and appearance of the uniform.
5. Personal appearance and grooming practices.

Worship practices. Some religious groups have worship practices that conflict with the Soldier's normal availability for duty; for example, worship on days other than Saturday or Sunday, a 25-hour Sabbath, or special holy days or periods. While many worship practices can be accommodated informally, others may require a formal accommodation request. Worship practices involving the use of prohibited substances require a waiver of Army policy and can only be approved by the SECARMY or designee.

Dietary practices. A Soldier with a conflict between the diet provided by the Army and that required by religious practice may also request an exception to policy to ration separately.

Medical care. Accommodations concerning medical care always require coordination between unit commander and appropriate healthcare provider. Unit commanders, in consultation with Military Treatment Facility commanders and/or their assigned medical advisor (that is, brigade surgeon), are the designated decision authority for medical practices which do not involve exemption from immunization. The Surgeon General is the decision authority for immunization exemptions and appeals concerning disapproved religious accommodations for other medical practices.

Wear and appearance of the uniform. Commanders may informally authorize wear of additional or alternative uniform items. Requests to wear apparel that is not authorized by AR 670 – 1 or DA Pam 670 – 1 require a religious accommodation request using the waiver request procedures in appendix P.

Appearance and Grooming. Soldiers must request a religious accommodation to engage in religious appearance and grooming practices, regardless of whether the practice is addressed in AR 670 – 1. Some uniform and grooming requests may be approved or disapproved by the GCMCA. Any request which requires a waiver of Army policy may only be approved or disapproved by the SECARMY or designee.

Routine RA requests are those not requiring waiver of Army policy:

- **Unit commanders can approve or disapprove** a RA request for worship and dietary practices, adjustments to work and duty rosters, *religious speech and abstentions*, dietary practices, meals, separate rations, and some uniform wear. unless it requires a waiver of Army policy.
- **Routine RA requests** are temporary and only last during the Soldiers time under that commander, and will need to be renewed on PCS, change of commander.
- **Requests Requiring Waiver or deviation from Army Policy** require GCMCA or higher approval. (see next slide for GCMCA approvals).
- **Disapproved RA requests can be appealed.** See Appendix P of AR 600-20

Timelines:

- **Routine RA requests** should be answered in writing by the unit commander within 10 days of receiving request.
- **GCMCA Timelines** The GCMCA must approve (or recommend disapprove) all RA requests with decision sent to requesting Soldier (if approved) or DCS G-1 (if recommending disapproval) NLT 30 days after unit receives request from the Soldier.
- **SECARMY Timelines** Requests exceeding AR 670-1 must be elevated from the GCMCA to the DCS G-1 for SECARMY consideration.

Commanders' considerations:

- **Military requirements** in terms of mission accomplishment, military readiness, unit cohesion, good order, discipline, health, and safety.
- **The religious importance** of the accommodation to the requestor.
- **The credibility** of the applicant
- **The cumulative impact** of repeated accommodations of a similar nature.
- **The measurable effect** of approving an accommodation, to include if it results in the sanctioned discrimination of other Soldiers.
- **Previous treatment** of the same or similar requests, including treatment of similar requests if made for other than religious reasons.

References:

- AR 600-20 (Army Command Policy) para 5/Appendix P (Accommodating Religious Practices)
- AR 670-1 (Wear and Appearance of Army Uniforms and Insignia)
- Title 10 USC 774, “Religious apparel: wearing while uniform”
- DODI 1300.17, “Religious Liberty in the Military Services”
- Title 42 USC 2000bb-1, “Free exercise of religion protected”
- FM 1-05 (Religious Support)

8th Army

Commanding General
LTG Willard M. Burleson III

Command Sergeant Major
CSM Robin M. Bolmer

Command Inspector General
COL Warren R. Wood

Inspector General SGM
MSG Dominic Arebalos

IG Points of Contact

8th Army IG Office
Building 12400
Camp Humphreys
APO AP 96251

<https://8tharmy.korea.army.mil/site/resource/inspect-or-general.asp>

Email:
usarmy.humphreys.8-army.list.igasst@army.mil

DSN 315-755-2000
Comm 050-3355-2000





8A Inspector General Newsletter

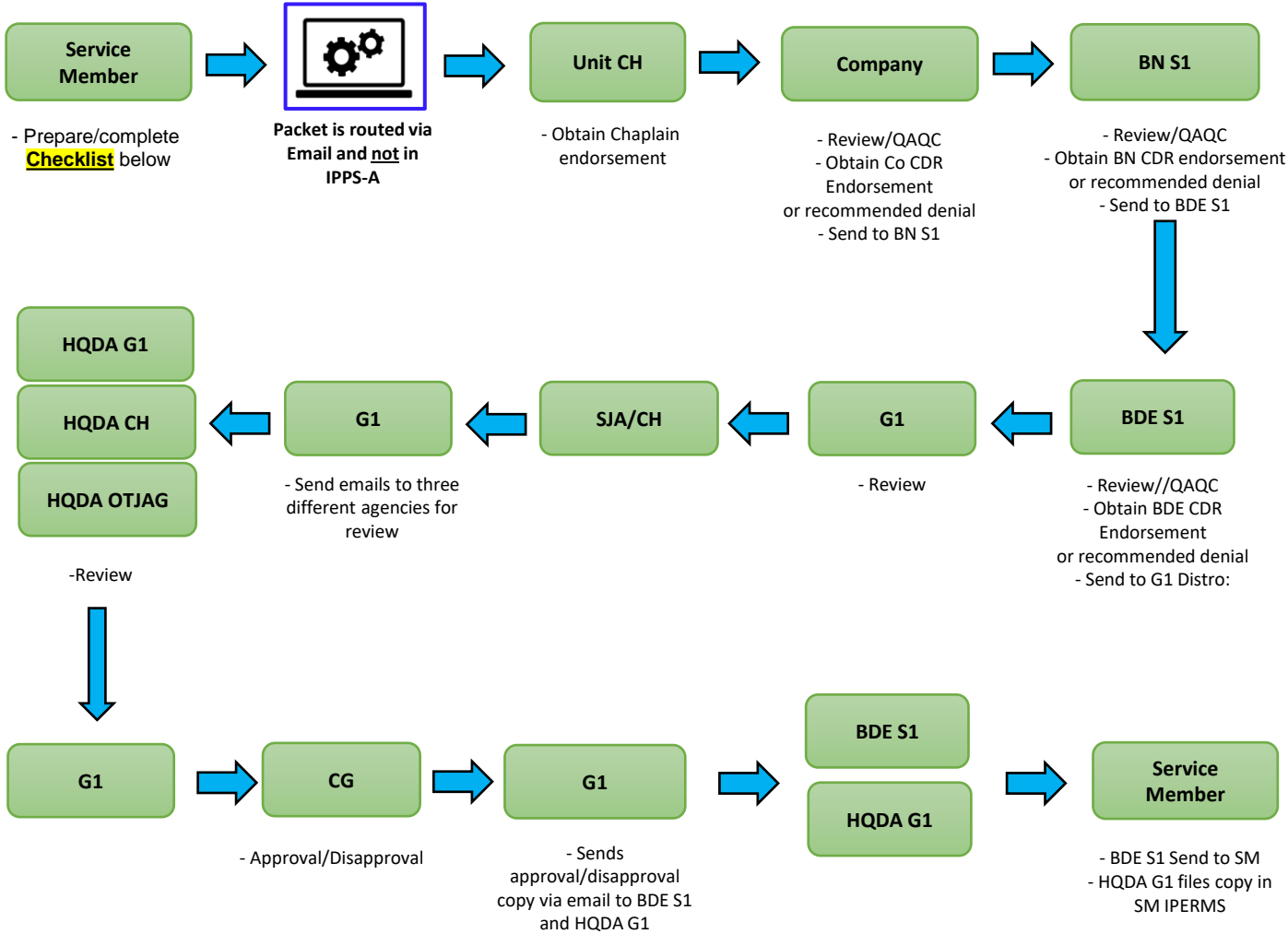


“Strength through Standards and Discipline” Volume X, Issue 10

Guidance on Religious Accommodations Process

Religious Accommodation Flowchart

(For more detailed description see AR 600-20, Appendix P)



NOTES:

1. Depending on category, the action may stop with approving commander.
2. Soldiers must continue to comply with all Army standards for non-accommodated Soldiers unless the request is approved.

Checklist

- Soldier Request Memo
- CH Endorsement memo
- Company Commander Endorsement
- BN Commander Endorsement
- BDE Commander Endorsement
- Optional - Include Photos, letters