



Religious Exception Introduction

The Department of Diversity and Civil Rights Compliance
141 Pryor Street, SW, 5th Floor
Atlanta Georgia, 30303
404-612-7305

The Department of Diversity and Civil Rights Compliance (DCRC) is pleased to have an opportunity to assist you.

In order to assist you properly, the DCRC needs your cooperation in obtaining information that will allow our staff to best evaluate and address your request(s).

The attached Religious Request for Exception from COVID-19 Vaccination & Testing Form (Form) and cover page are designed to provide you with the information you will need to get started.

Please fully complete and return the attached Form to the DCRC staff identified on the Form. Be sure to provide any documentation you have pertaining to and/or supporting your Religious Exception request with the Form. If you have any questions or need assistance with completing the Form, please call the DCRC's main telephone# (404) 612-7305. If you do not have email access or have difficulty submitting the attached Form electronically, please also call the DCRC's main telephone number# 404 612-7305 for assistance.

After receiving your completed Form, the DCRC will contact you by telephone and/or email to schedule a meeting with you to review your information and develop a detailed understanding of your concerns, issues, and exception request.

COVER PAGE

Requesting a Religious Exception from the County's COVID-19 Vaccination & Testing Policy

1. **What is a Religious Accommodation Based on COVID-19?**

A Religious Accommodation is any adjustment to the work environment that will allow the employee to comply, or to practice his, her, or their religious beliefs. The need for religious accommodation may arise where an individual's religious beliefs, observances or practices conflict with a specific task, requirement of the position, application process, condition of employment, or personnel policy, procedure or program. Social, political, or economic philosophies, or personal preferences, are not "religious" beliefs.

2. **How can I request an exception to the County's COVID-19 Vaccination & Testing Policy?**

As outlined in the County's COVID-19 Vaccination & Testing Policy and Procedure No. 113-21, any employee who perceives a conflict between the COVID-19 Vaccination & Testing Policy requirements and their sincerely held religious belief, observance, or practice should bring the conflict and his, her, or their request for exception to the Policy to the attention of their supervisor and/or the Department of Diversity and Civil Rights Compliance to initiate the religious accommodation process. Requests for a religious exception should be made in writing on the Religious Request for Exception from COVID-19 Vaccination & Testing Form provided by the Department of Diversity and Civil Rights Compliance.

3. **The Religious Exception and Accommodation Request process will include:**

- **Employee Completion of the Request Form,**
- **Review and assessment of the request,**
- **Discussions with the Employee, Employee's Supervisor/Manager/Department, and**
- **Receipt of Letter Notifying Employee of Approval/Denial of request**

Note: Employees must actively participate in the accommodation process and must cooperate with a Department's attempt to accommodate their needs.

4. **Is my Employer/Department required to approve my request for Religious Exception to the Vaccination and Testing Policy and provide a Religious Accommodation?**

No. Departments will attempt to accommodate requests for exception and provide religious accommodation, by balancing the request to accommodate the employee's religious practices with the particular needs of the department and work unit. If an exception is approved, the Department need only provide a religious accommodation that is reasonable. A Department is not required to accommodate an employee's religious beliefs and practices if doing so would impose an "undue hardship" on the employer's legitimate business interests.

5. **What information is required for consideration of a Religious Exception and Reasonable Religious Accommodation?**

The employee is obligated to explain the religious nature of the belief or practice at issue, and must not assume that the employer would already know or understand it. The employee must provide enough information to identify their religious belief, practice or observance and **explain** how getting the COVID-19 vaccination and/or complying with the testing requirement interferes with their religious belief, practice or observance.

6. **Can my supervisor fire, demote or treat me differently because I requested a Reasonable Religious Exception and Accommodation?**

No. Fulton County accommodates sincerely held religious beliefs, practices or observances to the extent required by law and prohibits retaliation for any conduct protected by applicable law. Although an accommodation request may be denied if it is unreasonable or poses an undue burden and/or presents a direct threat to the health and safety of others, Fulton County will not retaliate against any employee or applicant merely for requesting an exception to its policy and an accommodation.



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(404) 612-7305 TTY/Georgia Relay Service Dial 711

Religious Request for Exception from COVID-19 Vaccination & Testing

As outlined in Fulton County Personnel Policy No. 113-21 COVID-19 Vaccination and Testing, all Fulton County employees must comply with the COVID-19 vaccination or weekly COVID-19 testing requirement. Employees with a sincerely held religious belief, practice or observance that prohibits them from receiving a vaccine or testing, may request an exception to the Policy and seek a reasonable accommodation.

Employee Name: _____ Employee ID#: _____

RELIGIOUS EXCEPTION

Please complete this form to request a religious exception. ***Requests for religious exceptions will be reviewed based on the information provided in response to the below inquiry****. The County *may* require the submission of additional documentation or may need to obtain additional information concerning the identified religious belief, practice or observance from a religious leader or scholar.

(Please make your selection(s) below)

_____ I request an exception from the COVID-19 vaccination requirement

_____ I request an exception from the COVID-19 testing requirement

1) *Identify your religious belief, practice or observance and **explain** how your sincerely held religious belief, practice, or observance conflicts with the COVID-19 vaccination requirements and/or testing requirements. **(Attach additional documents if needed)**

2) To continue to protect employees and the community, employees that have approved exception(s) to the vaccination and/or testing requirement may be subject to alternative safety measures such as mask wearing, social distancing, etc. If additional reasonable accommodations are necessary beyond the exception to the vaccination and/or testing requirement, please contact DCRC to request them separately.

3) Have you notified or had discussions with your immediate Supervisor, Manager, Appointing Authority, or HR Representative regarding your need for a Religious Exception and Accommodation? Yes ___ No ___ If yes, please state what was discussed, whom was it discussed with, when was it discussed and what was the outcome of the discussion? **(Attach additional documents if needed)**

4) Provide the name and contact information of your Immediate Supervisor, Manager, Appointing Authority and Department:

I DO HEREBY CERTIFY THAT, TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF, ALL OF THE ABOVE INFORMATION IS TRUE AND CORRECT. SHOULD ANY OF THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ON THIS FORM CHANGE, I AGREE TO INFORM THE FULTON COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF DIVERSITY AND CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLIANCE IN WRITING WITHIN TEN (5) CALENDAR DAYS OF APPLICABLE CHANGE(S).

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____

Employee Email: _____

Phone: _____

Please submit completed forms and direct any questions regarding the contents of this form to:

DCRC Officer II: melissa.cuthrell@fultoncountyga.gov (404) 612-8356

DCRC Officer I/EO: pamela.george@fultoncountyga.gov (404) 612-0961