



*State of North Carolina*  
*Department of Public Safety*  
*Prisons*

Chapter: H  
Section: .0100  
Title: **Religious Services**  
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**POLICY & PROCEDURES**

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**.0101 SCOPE**

- (a) Prisons employ a Director of Chaplaincy Services to formulate and provide professional supervision of chaplaincy services. The Director of Chaplaincy Services provides guidance and assistance for the religious services and programs to all the facilities within Prisons. The Chaplaincy Services Director is familiar with multiple religions, and coordinates those practices within Prisons Policy and Procedures. The Chaplaincy Services Director communicates with religious judicatory leaders, clinical pastoral care supervisors, theological educators, medical, attorneys, prison administrators, legislators, volunteers, **offenders** and their families. The Chaplaincy Services Director and staff are responsible for coordinating recruitment, screening as the Subject Matter Expert and selection of State-funded, Temporary, Community-Funded and Volunteer Chaplains. The Chaplaincy Services Central office staff provides technical support for the facilities' Clinical Chaplains or other designated staff.
- (b) Prisons employ Clinical Chaplains or other designated staff to provide moral, spiritual and pastoral care, and ministerial services to **offenders** in the custody of the Prisons. Each chaplain is required to maintain the endorsement of his/or her religious body and remain in good standing according to its requirements. A chaplain shall not be required to personally conduct religious services which violate his/her religious body's doctrine or teachings. However, all chaplains or other designated staff will be required to coordinate/or supervise services. All chaplains or other designated staff shall maintain confidentiality i.e. clergy privileged communication, except in cases when there is a threat to safety, security and health of staff, **offenders** and the general public.
- (c) Prisons shall provide access for approved religious services or practices and pastoral care in all prison facilities. **Offender** participation shall be voluntary. No **offender** shall be subjected to coercion, harassment, or ridicule due to religious affiliation. In the event an **offender** reports that he/or she has been subjected to coercion, harassment, or ridicule due to religious affiliation he/or she should report to facility staff.
- (d) The Chaplaincy Services Director is responsible for maintaining the Prisons Religious Policy Manual. The manual accommodates the official religions, practices, and authorized religious items for the **offender** population. The manual also includes a list of authorized religious items for **offenders** in restrictive housing (SAFEKEEPERS, RHAP, RHDP, HCON and RHCP).

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**.0102 COMMUNITY-FUNDED AND VOLUNTEER CHAPLAINS**

- (a) Community-funded chaplains are chaplains funded by community churches or other religious organizations. These chaplains must have the proper credentials and have a signed covenant on file at Chaplaincy Services Central office. These chaplains will be appointed by the Chaplaincy Services Director, subject to the approval of the Director of Prisons. The Director of Prisons may, at will, remove any community-funded chaplain.
- (b) Volunteer chaplains must have the proper credentials and have a signed covenant on file at the Chaplaincy Services Central office. These chaplains will be appointed by the Chaplaincy Services Director, subject to the approval of the Director of Prisons. The Director of Prisons may, at will, remove any volunteer chaplain.
- (c) All Chaplains (State-funded, Temporary, Community Funded and Volunteers) are required to participate in New Chaplains Orientation and Training. A DVD recording of all recognized faiths and their sacred items are made available for the training of all staff that has direct contact with **offenders**. Additionally, all Chaplaincy staff and volunteers are required to participate in annual training as outlined by Prisons policy.
- (d) All North Carolina Prisons' Covenanted Volunteer and Community-Funded Chaplains will be required to have a picture identification card. The representative's photographs and identification card will be captured through the automated Digital Photo System and/or Auxiliary Photo Capture Stations.
- (e) At the discretion of the Facility Head, the chaplain or other designated staff will have access to all areas of the facility to minister to all **offenders**.
- (f) At the discretion of the Facility Head, relevant contents of prison records may be communicated to a community-funded chaplain by an appropriate staff member when such information is considered essential to the fulfillment of the chaplain's duties. Confidentiality shall be maintained by the chaplain.

**.0103 PROCEDURES**

- (a) Religious practices for **offenders** other than those in the regular population will be reviewed and approved by the facility head in consultation with the chaplain and Chaplaincy Services Central Office consistent with this policy. Requests for practices exceeding those authorized in H .0106 should be referred to the Religious Practices Committee for final determination.
- (b) **Offenders** who wish to have incorporated a religious practice that is not recognized by Prisons must submit a DC-572 Request for Religious Assistance form to the facility chaplain or other designated staff, who will then consult with the Chaplaincy Services Director regarding the availability of temporary accommodations in conjunction with the facility head or designee. Determinations regarding temporary accommodations are

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made on a case-by-case basis and are subject to the operational requirements of each facility.

- (c) Specific religious practices policies and procedures are detailed in the Prisons' Religious Practices Reference Manual. This manual includes a list of the current faith practices that are now officially recognized by Prisons. It also includes a brief description of the basic beliefs, authorized practices, worship procedures and authorized religious items associated with each faith. A copy of this manual may be found in the office of the Chaplain or other designated staff
- (d) Inmate End of Life Care Protocol

The purpose of this section is to ensure that Prisons staff understand and be consistent in applying the End of Life Protocol procedures. In the last phase of life, people seek peace and dignity. To help realize this, every offender should be able to fairly expect elements of care from physicians, health care institutions, and the Prisons. The nature of dying and death has changed, it is occurring more frequently as a result of chronic illness. The following procedures will be followed for providing End of Life Care:

- (1) The Facility
  - (A) Offender patient is admitted to an outside facility.
  - (B) Outside hospital physician/staff will contact the prison facility (medical, facility head, or officer-in-charge) concerning seriously ill designation, or
  - (C) The Prisons custody staff assigned to the offender's room will communicate with the OIC that the offender's condition has downgraded to seriously ill.
  - (D) The OIC will notify the facility head and the facility chaplain. If the facility chaplain is not available the facility head will instruct the OIC to activate the End of Life Protocol (EOLP) and notify the officer in the offender's room.
  - (E) The Prisons custody staff assigned to the offender's room will request that the hospital nurse contact the hospital chaplain.
  - (F) The officer assigned to the offender's room will note the hospital chaplain's name and visit in the activity log.
  - (G) During regular work hours, the Facility Head shall contact the offender's next of kin or immediate family or if the Facility Head is not available, the chain of command process is to be used.
  - (H) All persons granted a visit with the offender must be cleared through the

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facility's OIC.

(2) The Community Hospital Chaplain

Pastoral Caregivers provides spiritual support and guidance to ill and dying patients, their families and our staff. Pastoral Caregivers, work closely with physicians, nurses, and North Carolina Prisons. Most hospitals have resources available 24- hours a day, seven days a week to listen, offer prayer, ease stress, and help the offender and family deal with end-of-life issues. Pastoral Care providers work with patients of all denominations.

(3) The Hospital Chaplain

- (A) Will not make any phone calls to an offender's family members
- (B) Will ensure that the offender's faith and practice are observed.
- (C) May provide pastoral care with offender's family if requested.
- (D) No hospital clergy will be allowed to accompany the family members in the offender's room unless it is approved by the facility head or officer-in-charge.

(e) Inmate Transportation and Religious Items

When being transported by Prisons vehicle, offenders must pack all their personal religious property in their property bag.

**.0104 INMATE RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS**

- (a) Offenders shall have the freedom to make a religious commitment, change a religious commitment, or reject religion altogether.
- (b) Offenders may request a Declaration of Faith form to register a change in religious affiliation. All requests to change religious affiliation will be reviewed separately. Once a religious affiliation is declared, a request for change will not be considered until 12 months from the previous Declaration of Faith date. All requests must be completed by the offender and submitted to the facility chaplain or other designated staff. Any change shall be documented on the offender's religious preference information in OPUS. The offender's religious property specific to her/his former religious preference must be sent outside the facility or destroyed according to the offender preference and facility policy.

**.0105 OFFENDER REQUEST FOR RELIGIOUS ASSISTANCE**

- (a) An offender whose religion is not currently recognized by Prisons or whose religious request cannot be met within the framework of existing approved religious services must

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submit a written request for assistance using the designated DC-572 Request for Religious Assistance: Fact Sheet form.

- (b) The form shall be made available to any **offender**, upon request, regardless of custody status. The form must be submitted to the facility chaplain or other designated staff by the **offender**. Upon receipt of the completed form, the facility chaplain or other designated staff shall process the **offender's** request for religious assistance.
- (c) The **offender** must provide an authoritative source of information for the requested religion or faith practice to the facility chaplain or designated staff in order to verify the existence of the religion.
- (d) The facility chaplain or designee will have 30 days to assist the **offender** with the request. Upon completion of the DC-572, the facility chaplain or other designated staff will create a memorandum detailing the steps taken to provide assistance and shall forward the DC-572, memo, and other pertinent information to the Chaplaincy Services Director. If this step has not been complete within 30 days, the chaplain will send a letter to the **offender**, facility head, and the Chaplaincy Services Director advising of the status of the **offender's** request.
- (e) An **offender's** request for religious accommodation shall be evaluated by the Religious Practices Committee within **120** days and the **offender** will be notified of the committee's recommendation. The Religious Practice committee will conduct a subject matter review and research the information provided. The committee's recommendation and the DC-572 shall be maintained by the Chaplaincy Services Director. If the Religious Practices Committee recommends the establishment of policy for a new religious or faith practice, the draft policy will be sent through the normal chain of command for review. Any legal review will be documented and forwarded back to the Prisons for disposition. If this step is not completed within **120** days, the Chaplaincy Services Director will send a letter to the **offender**, facility head, the facility chaplain or other designated staff advising them of the status of the **offender's** request.

#### **.0106 AUTHORIZED RELIGIOUS PRACTICES**

- (a) Race, color, creed or national origin shall not be a basis for excluding an **offender** from attending any religious service.
- (b) Regular population **offenders** are allowed to attend any corporate worship service held at the facility.
- (c) Due to safety and security concerns, SAFEKEEPERS, **offenders** in Restrictive Housing (RHAP, RHDP, HCON and RHCP) will not be allowed to attend corporate worship services with the general population as outlined in the North Carolina Prisons, Conditions of Confinement policy C.1219 (d).
- (d) **Rehabilitative Diversion Unit (RDU) and Therapeutic Diversion Unit offenders will have**

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access to Chaplaincy Services. Access to Religious Services will be provided in Phase 3.

- (e) Any offender may privately pray, meditate, and study scriptures or religious literature in his or her cell, so long as the offender does not interfere with other offender(s), the offender's assigned program or work assignments, security or operational management.
- (f) Upon request, an offender may be considered for enrollment in religious correspondence courses. An offender's request to use a foreign language for religious study shall be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- (g) Clergy and other spiritual advisors may be admitted to visit an offender at the offender's request, subject to Prisons policies regarding visitation and coordination of the facility chaplain or other designated staff and approval of the facility head. The Community religious official must have received their credentials from a residential accredited school or an endorsing faith group body.
- (h) The facility Chaplain or designated staff may request assistance from a community religious official to perform a wedding, baptism, or other religious rites/rituals subject to Prisons policies regarding visitation policy. The approval will follow the chain of command through the facility head.
- (i) The Chaplaincy Services Director shall maintain a list of faith groups approved for the use of sacramental wine. Sacramental wine may be approved for religious services. Requests must be made to the facility chaplain or other designated staff and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Only the religious official leading the rite may consume alcohol. Offenders are not allowed to consume ANY alcoholic beverages while in the custody of the Department of Public Safety.
- (j) The policies and procedures detailed in the North Carolina Prisons' Religious Practices Reference Manual, and any others authorized by the Religious Practices Committee and the Director of Prisons or designee shall be used to administer all religious practices.

#### **.0107 RELIGIOUS CORPORATE SERVICES**

- (a) To protect the integrity and authenticity of the beliefs and practices of religious services and programs, a Facility Chaplain or designated staff shall be responsible for the coordination, facilitation, and supervision of offender religious services and programs.
- (b) If a facility chaplain or community volunteer is not available for a specific minority faith group and at least six (6) offenders regularly attend services then an offender faith helper may be considered to assist with facilitation of a religious service or program. The faith group must be listed in the Religious Practices Manual.

- (1) **Offender** Faith Helper is defined as an **offender** who:
  - (A) Acts as a facilitator for services of a specific faith group, according to the tenants and authorized practices of the specific faith group as accommodated in the religious practices manual.
  - (B) Has been designated as such by successfully completing the “**offender** faith helper” application process.
  - (C) As appropriate, serves as the liaison between the **offender** practitioners of the specific faith group and facility chaplains or designated staff.
- (2) The procedures for **Offender** Faith Helpers are detailed in the Prisons’ Religious Policy.

#### **.0108 COMMITTEES**

- (a) **ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON RELIGIOUS MINISTRY IN PRISONS**  
The Secretary of NC Public Safety hereby establishes the Advisory Committee on Religious Ministry in Prisons for the purpose of serving as a resource for the expansion and strengthening of chaplaincy services and religious activities within Prisons. Committee activities shall be governed by the rules and regulations promulgated by the NC Department of Public Safety. The Committee shall report to the Director of Prisons.
- (b) **THE RELIGIOUS PRACTICES COMMITTEE**  
The Director of Prisons or designee shall appoint and may remove at will members of the Religious Practices Committee. **Offender** requests for religious practices not officially accommodated will be researched by the Religious Practices Committee.
- (c) **THE CHAPLAINS STEERING COMMITTEE**  
The Steering Committee is authorized to assist the North Carolina Department of Public Safety with improving chaplaincy services and religious services and programs within Prisons. The committee shall be called the “Chaplains Steering Committee” and shall function through the Chaplaincy Services Director.



February 1, 2018

Director of Prisons

Date

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