

<b>GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS</b> <b>Standard Operating Procedures</b>		
<b>Policy Name:</b> New Offender Orientation for Religious Programs		
<b>Policy Number:</b> 106.05	<b>Effective Date:</b> 11/6/2017	<b>Page Number:</b> 1 of 2
<b>Authority:</b> Commissioner	<b>Originating Division:</b> Inmate Services Division	<b>Access Listing:</b> Level II: Required Offender Access

**I. Introduction and Summary:**

The Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) respects the religious freedoms of all offenders and will provide religious programming as requested. Chaplain(s), through formal orientation sessions, will inform new offenders of the availability of religious programs at GDC facilities. Assigned Chaplain(s), in coordination with and approval from facility leadership, will direct and accommodate all aspects of religious programming.

**II. Authority:**

- A. United States Constitution: First and Fourteenth Amendment;
- B. American with Disabilities Act;
- C. GDC SOPs: 106.11 Religious Accommodations and 106.04 Chaplaincy Services; and
- D. ACA Standards: 2-CO-5E-01, 2-CO-5E-02, and 4-4514.

**III. Definitions:**

None

**IV. Statement of Policy and Applicable Procedures:**

- A. The Chaplain(s) will provide an orientation session explaining Chaplaincy Services for all new offenders. This orientation will be offered to all new offenders within thirty (30) days of their arrival at Diagnostics Intake and upon arrival at each facility assigned and will include the following:
  - 1. Ministries offered;
  - 2. Times and locations of worship services and programs, to include both individual and corporate observance;
  - 3. Procedures for participating in Chaplaincy ministries, religious services, and programs;
  - 4. Procedures for obtaining religious and devotional materials;
  - 5. Procedures for clergy visits;
  - 6. Procedures for Religious Accommodations, as outlined in SOP 106.11;

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7. Encouragement of offender involvement in Chaplaincy ministries, religious services and programs; and
  8. Answer questions relative to Chaplaincy ministries, religious services, programs and materials.
- B. During Diagnostics Intake, and as allowed per section C below, an offender may designate their religious preference by completing Attachment 1, Request to Designate/Change Religious Preference Form. Noting a religious preference on this form is for self-identification purposes only and does not bind the Department to accommodate any religious belief or practice, other than respecting the offender's right to believe as they choose. However, the Department may limit participation in religious gatherings, activities, and special religious accommodations to those offenders who designated their religion on the form and who demonstrate a sincerely held religious belief.
- C. Offenders may request to change their religious preference once every six (6) months. To request a change, offenders shall complete a Request to Designate/Change Religious Preference Form, Attachment 1, in the presence of the Facility Chaplain (the form may be forwarded to the offender's Counselor when the Chaplain is not available).
- D. Offenders that would like to change their religious designation more than once in a six (6) month period, must submit a Religious Accommodations Request pursuant to SOP 106.11, Religious Accommodations.
- E. Religious designations and religious accommodations shall be documented in SCRIBE.
- V. **Attachments:**  
Attachment 1, Request to Designate/Change Religious Preference Form
- VI. **Record Retention of Forms Relevant to this Policy:**  
Upon completion, Attachment 1 shall be placed in the offender's institutional file and that file shall be maintained according to the records retention schedule.