



PACIFIC JUSTICE INSTITUTE

Religious Accommodation for Employees

In most public and private workplaces, the primary legal option for objecting to a requirement that conflicts with your conscience is by requesting an accommodation of your **sincerely-held religious beliefs**. This option is governed by **Title VII of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964**, as well as by similar state statutes. **Making the request does not guarantee it will be granted, but it obligates the employer to engage in an interactive process** with you to determine what accommodations are possible without creating an undue hardship for its operations.

Requests for accommodation must be **submitted** to your employer **in writing** (electronic submission is equally effective). If your employer has created a form for vaccine and related accommodations or exemptions, you should use their form, including the information described below in the space provided on their form. If no form has been provided by the employer, you can submit the below information as a letter.

1. State that you are requesting an accommodation of your **sincerely-held religious beliefs**.
2. **Explain why your beliefs conflict with the vaccine or related job requirement. Cite Scriptures** whenever possible to explain your beliefs.
3. If you mention scientific aspects of the vaccines, do so only to the limited extent necessary to explain the conflict with your religious beliefs. **Avoid debating or trying to educate your employer about the effectiveness of the vaccines, research studies, etc. Also do not attempt to argue legal points about the Constitution or other laws—stay narrowly focused on your religious beliefs.**
4. Request an accommodation. Propose alternatives that will meet the employer's underlying health and safety objectives without violating your conscience. Be positive and emphasize that you value your job and are committed to the well-being of your workplace, co-workers and customers.
5. We recommend concluding with a sentence which reads: **"Based on my sincerely held religious convictions described above, I respectfully request a religious accommodation pursuant to Title VII."**

Note that the law does not permit your employer to require a letter from your church, minister, or place of worship to corroborate your beliefs. Your own religious beliefs are sufficient. If you already have a supporting letter from your pastor, this could be included at your option.

Due to the extraordinary volume of requests we are receiving at this time, PJI is unable to review and comment on every accommodation letter being sent to us. Following the above guidelines should, however, put you in the strongest position to either have your request granted, or to contest its denial.

I'm not 100% this is legally correct. I believe the employer is *not required* or specifically *legally empowered* to ask for such a letter. Therefore, it is legally optional, but I don't think anything specifically stops them from requiring it as part of their corporate process. I have seen one airline deny the religious exemption for not providing the letter but subsequently approve the exemption when they provided such a letter. The letter can from a friend, since not everyone is part of "an organized religion".