



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
COMMANDANT OF CADETS
USAF ACADEMY COLORADO

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL USAFA/CW ALL

SEP 19 2011

FROM: HQ USAFA/CW

SUBJECT: Religious Freedom

1. As members of the United States Military, we have all taken a sworn oath to uphold, support and defend the Constitution of the United States. In taking that oath, we pledged a solemn commitment to the First Amendment protections for free exercise of religion and the prohibition against government establishment of religion. The Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment requires that our government respect a person's religious beliefs and practices and not interfere with their religious preferences. The Establishment Clause of the First Amendment requires governmental neutrality toward religion and prohibits the preference of one religion over another.
2. The United States Air Force Academy Cadet Wing (USAFA/CW) acknowledges a neutral stance in regard to religious beliefs and does not endorse or disapprove the practice or absence of any faith.
3. USAFA/CW remains committed to protecting an individual's right to practice the religion of their choosing provided they do not violate policy or law or impede mission accomplishment. The Air Force Academy acknowledges that religious faith is a personal issue and a constitutional liberty that no one shall compromise.
4. In turn, voluntary religious discussions are permitted in the Cadet Wing provided it is clear that the discussions are personal, not official, and free of the potential for, or the appearance of, coercion. If any cadet or permanent party member experiences any level of coercion, they should attempt to amicably address the issue at the lowest level practical. If that course of action is not feasible or successful, they should engage the chain of command to investigate and/or mediate resolution. Other valuable resources available are the Chaplain Corps, who offer the privilege of confidentiality, the 10th Air Base Wing Equal Opportunity Office, the Peak Performance Center, the Inspector General, and our team of cadet Personal Ethics and Education Representatives (PEERs).
5. Religious pluralism and mutual respect among the cadet wing is vital. The Air Force has proven systems in place for conflict resolution, and it is imperative that we engage leadership at all levels to affect solutions. In closing, I encourage you, as members of USAFA, to heed this memorandum and act accordingly. Freedom of Religion is a right we have all committed our lives to defend; therefore, we must ensure it is always exercised freely at this great institution.

RICHARD M. CLARK, Brig Gen, USAF
Commandant of Cadets



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON DC 20330

SEP 1 2011

MEMORANDUM FOR ALMAJCOM-FOA-DRU/CC


FROM: HQ USAF/CC
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1670

SUBJECT: Maintaining Government Neutrality Regarding Religion

Leaders at all levels must balance Constitutional protections for an individual's free exercise of religion or other personal beliefs and its prohibition against governmental establishment of religion. For example, they must avoid the actual or apparent use of their position to promote their personal religious beliefs to their subordinates or to extend preferential treatment for any religion. Commanders or supervisors who engage in such behavior may cause members to doubt their impartiality and objectivity. The potential result is a degradation of the unit's morale, good order, and discipline.

Chaplain Corps programs, including activities such as religious studies, faith sharing, and prayer meetings, are vital to commanders' support of individual Airmen's needs and provide opportunities for the free exercise of religion. Although commanders are responsible for these programs, they must refrain from appearing to officially endorse religion generally or any particular religion. Therefore, I expect chaplains, not commanders, to notify Airmen of Chaplain Corps programs.

Our chaplains are trained to provide advice to leadership on matters related to the free exercise of religion and to help commanders care for all of their people, regardless of their beliefs. If you have concerns involving the preservation of government neutrality regarding religious beliefs, consult with your chaplain and staff judge advocate before you act.



NORTON A. SCHWARTZ
General, USAF
Chief of Staff