

Religious Accommodations for Head Coverings During Booking Process

Policy

No. 425

Effective Date

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I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to Rutherford County Sheriff's Office ("RCSO") personnel regarding religious accommodations for arrestees during the booking process.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the RCSO to respect the religious beliefs and practices of all inmates and may make, on request, a reasonable accommodation that does not create a safety risk or undue hardship on the RCSO. Arrestees shall be free to exercise their religious practices so long as it does not impede RCSO's compelling interest in maintaining security, safety, discipline, and orderly jail operation. If limits on religious exercise are warranted, they will be administered in the least restrictive means necessary under the circumstances. Individuals photographed pursuant to booking procedures are not required to remove religious head coverings as long as facial features are clearly visible.

III. PROCEDURES

Individuals surrendered to RCSO custody by law enforcement authorities, or who appear at the citations office to be booked on a criminal citation are photographed as part of the booking process. All arrestees entering the RCSO through Booking are required to be searched.

1. Arrestees and citation recipients are not required to remove religious head coverings for booking photos as long as the view of the face and profile are not obstructed by religious attire.
2. As part of the booking process, persons wearing religious head coverings must remove the covering and allow the head to be searched. The search should be conducted outside the presence of members of the opposite sex. After the search, the head covering may be placed back on for the remainder of the booking process.