



Policy Directive 7

Religious and Spiritual Activities

- Relevant Instruments: [Prisons Act 1981](#) s 95E
[Prisons Regulations 1982](#) r 38 (1b), r 54D (f)
[Standard Guidelines for Corrections in Australia 2004](#)
 1.17 and 3.21
[Adult Custodial Rule 7: Communication - Visits](#)
[PD 9: Permit for Absence](#)
[PD 18: Prisoner Orientation](#)
[PD 42: Prisoner Property](#)
[PD 53: Activity Programs](#)
[PD 57: Induction Program for Persons Working in a Prison](#)

Table of contents

1. Purpose	1
2. Scope	1
3. Definitions.....	2
4. Policy.....	2
5. Supporting Appendices	4
6. Approved.....	4
7. Policy Sponsors.....	4
8. Contact Person.....	4
9. Version History	4

1. Purpose

To provide all prisoners with an equal opportunity to practise the form of religion or spiritual beliefs of their choice, subject to the requirements of maintaining the security and good order of the prison.

2. Scope

This policy directive applies to both public and private prisons.

3. Definitions

Chaplain	A person who is contracted by the Department of Corrective Services (DCS) to provide a funded service and facilitate chaplaincy work and religious activities within a prison.
Coordinating Chaplain	The Chaplain appointed by the Prison Chaplains' Association to facilitate chaplaincy work and religious activities in a particular prison.
Prison Chaplains' Association	The Association of which members consist of religious representatives officially appointed by their churches or by the Churches Chaplaincy Committee, endorsed by the DCS and whose appointment is acknowledged by the Heads of Churches to work in prisons or detention centres in a chaplaincy capacity.
Religious article	An item (including literature) of special significance that has spiritual, religious or devotional meaning.
Religious/Spiritual visitor	A person approved to visit prisoners under s 95E(b) of the <i>Prisons Act 1981</i> . Religious/Spiritual visitors are not employees or contracted with the Department, they are strictly visitors for the purpose of providing religious or spiritual guidance to prisoners.
Superintendent	The designated Superintendent or Officer in Charge (OIC) of a public prison and the Director or OIC of a private prison.

4. Policy

4.1 General

- 4.1.1 The Department of Corrective Services (the Department) acknowledges and respects the religious and spiritual diversity of its prison population.
- 4.1.2 Each prison shall have procedures in place to recognise the diversity of prisoners within their respective facility.
- 4.1.3 When carrying out duties, officers shall behave in a manner which reflects respect and sensitivity towards religious or spiritual beliefs, practices, objects and symbols.
- 4.1.4 A prisoner must not be subject to any form of discrimination by declaring themselves of any faith or religion or as belonging to none.
- 4.1.5 A prisoner must not be required to undertake such work that is unsuitable or offensive to their registered religion or spiritual beliefs.
- 4.1.6 The Department has a responsibility to maintain the safety and security of each prison and the persons within. Superintendents may impose restrictions on provisions outlined in this Policy Directive for the purpose of the safety and security of the prison or any person.

4.2 Religious or spiritual observance

4.2.1 In line with s 95E of the *Prisons Act 1981* prisoners shall be permitted to:

- practice and observe their religious or spiritual beliefs
- receive guidance and visits from recognised and approved religious or spiritual representatives with similar religious beliefs to those of the prisoner (refer to section 8 of [Appendix 1 – Procedures](#)).

4.2.2 Prisoners have the right to change their designated religion.

4.2.3 The Superintendent shall approve the scheduling of religious/spiritual activities.

4.3 Roles and responsibilities

4.3.1 The Assistant Commissioner Custodial Services and the Prison Chaplains' Association shall administer and coordinate the Prison Chaplaincy and religious/spiritual activities.

4.3.2 The Superintendent, Coordinating Chaplain, other Chaplains and approved religious /spiritual representatives shall facilitate activities at each prison.

4.3.3 The Prison Chaplains' Association should:

- provide guidelines and support for Chaplains and religious activities
- appoint a Coordinating Chaplain to each prison
- provide information and advice to the Assistant Commissioner Custodial Services regarding an organisation's religious standing as required
- monitor approved religious groups and visitors in consultation with the Coordinating Chaplain at the relevant prison.

4.3.4 The Coordinating Chaplain should:

- consult with the Superintendent regarding the provision of religious/spiritual activities at the prison, including access to the prison and designated areas
- act as a resource to the Superintendent and advise on religious/spiritual matters within the prison
- identify religious or spiritual visitors for a particular faith or tradition and verify the credentials of religious or spiritual visitors
- notify the appropriate approved religious/spiritual representative when a prisoner of a particular faith or tradition requests services
- at the prisoner's request, contact prisoners' personal religious representative who has been ministering to them in the community prior to imprisonment, and provide information on visiting procedures.

4.3.5 Chaplains shall:

- offer pastoral and listening support to prisoners
- offer pastoral and listening support to officers and others where requested
- provide the Superintendent with information on religious/spiritual beliefs to be disseminated to staff.

5. Supporting appendices

- [Appendix 1](#) – Religious and Spiritual Activities – Procedures
- [Appendix 2](#) – Application to Visit Prisoners Form
- [Appendix 3](#) – Notification of Change of Religion Form

The Deputy Commissioner Adult Custodial may update the supporting appendices to this policy as required.

6. Approved

Commissioner:

Signature:



Date: 27 February 2013

7. Policy sponsors

Assistant Commissioner Custodial Operations

Assistant Commissioner Custodial Services

8. Contact person

The following person may be approached on a routine basis in relation to this policy:

Principal Operational Policy Officer

Telephone: 9264 1958

9. Version history

Version	Approved	Effective from
1	First published	4 April 2007
2	Amended - legislative references corrected	7 February 2011
3	Amended	8 April 2013