

EEOC Expands Guidance for Employers on Religious Objections to Workplace Vaccination Requirements

What You Need to Know

- The latest EEOC guidance explains how Title VII applies when an applicant or employee requests exemption from a COVID-19 vaccine requirement because of the individual's sincerely held religious beliefs, practices, or observances.
- Employers should consider all possible reasonable accommodations after receiving a request for exemption due to a sincerely held religious belief.
- Employers should consult with legal counsel to ensure compliance with local and federal guidance related to their COVID-19 vaccination policies and related employee rights.

On October 25, 2021, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) updated and expanded its technical guidance to employers regarding religious objections to workplace vaccine requirements.

The [expanded guidance](#) explains how Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), which prohibits discrimination based on religion, applies when an applicant or employee requests exemption from an employer's COVID-19 vaccine requirement because of the individual's sincerely held religious beliefs, practices, or observances.

EEOC Chair Charlotte A. Burrows stated that "Title VII requires employers to accommodate employees' sincerely held religious beliefs, practices, and observances absent undue hardship. This update will help safeguard that fundamental right as employers seek to protect workers and the public from the unique threat of COVID-19."

The key EEOC updates for employers to consider are summarized below:

As a best practice, all employers should regularly communicate with legal counsel to ensure compliance with local and federal guidance related to employees' rights, including COVID-19 vaccine policies. Please contact the author of this Alert, **Ghatul Abdul**, for additional information or to discuss your specific circumstances. Ms. Abdul

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