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NAVADMIN 140/26

MSGID/GENADMIN/CNO WASHINGTON DC/N1/JUN//

SUBJ/UPDATED GUIDANCE ON GROOMING STANDARDS AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY//

REF/A/MEMO/SECWAR/11MAR26//
REF/B/DOC/DOW/01SEP20//
REF/C/DOC/BUPERS/09JUN26//
REF/D/DOC/NAVPERS/01JAN23//
REF/E/MEMO/SECNAV/27MAY26
REF/F/MEMO/SECWAR/30SEP25//

NARR/REF A IS SECRETARY OF WAR MEMORANDUM, GUIDANCE ON GROOMING STANDARDS FOR FACIAL HAIR AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.
REF B IS DOW INSTRUCTION 1300.17, RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN THE MILITARY SERVICES.
REF C IS BUPERSINST 1730.11B, ACCOMMODATION OF RELIGIOUS PRACTICES.
REF D IS U.S. NAVY UNIFORM REGULATIONS.
REF E IS SECRETARY OF THE NAVY MEMORANDUM, DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY IMPLEMENTATION OF GROOMING STANDARDS FOR FACIAL HAIR.
REF F IS SECRETARY OF WAR MEMORANDUM, GROOMING STANDARDS FOR FACIAL HAIR IMPLEMENTATION.//

RMKS/1. In the complex maritime domain, safety is intrinsically linked to overall mission success. The tactical proficiency, physical resilience, and cognitive readiness of each warfighter form the foundational building blocks of our combat power. Consequently, individual performance is a direct multiplier for the lethality of our Fleet. Individual capability and survivability impacts the life, health, and safety of the overall crew. Force preservation requires deliberate consideration of individual rights in the context of uncompromising operational requirements. Modern threats present an existential risk to the individual warfighter; individual casualties immediately cascade into degraded unit readiness, compromised lethality, and reduced overall survivability. Commanding Officers must objectively weigh the fundamental value of accommodating religious practices against the compelling, life-or-death interest of maintaining an absolute protective posture and ensuring the operational viability of our Fleet.

2. This NAVADMIN implements procedures for the reevaluation of religious accommodation (RA) requests for facial hair pursuant to reference (a) and announces policy updates to align reference (c) with reference (a). Reference (a) directs that currently approved RAs related to grooming standards for facial hair be reevaluated using standardized procedures that ensure consistent, lawful, and equitable outcomes. Reference (d) provides

uniform guidance for the wear of approved facial hair. Reference (e) provides guidance for implementing reference (a), including required timelines.

3. Applicability

a. This NAVADMIN applies to all active and reserve Sailors with currently approved or pending RAs for waiver of grooming standards for facial hair.

b. This NAVADMIN applies to all other Sailors seeking renewed consideration of previously denied requests when there has been a change in pertinent policy or other material circumstance.

c. This NAVADMIN applies to all Sailors seeking an RA in line with references (b) and (c).

4. Policy.

a. Reference (a) clarifies policy in reference (b) and provides specific materials that must be included when submitting RA requests. Reference (c) has been updated to incorporate these specific requirements and guidance.

b. Reference (a) constitutes a material change in circumstances under which currently approved RA requests were granted.

Accordingly, all currently approved and pending RA requests for waiver of grooming standards for facial hair must be reevaluated in line with reference (b), paragraph 3.2.g.

5. Required action.

a. Commands shall immediately engage all personnel with approved and pending RAs for waiver of grooming standards for facial hair and submit command information as required in reference (a).

b. All Sailors with approved or pending RA requests for waiver of grooming standards for facial hair shall resubmit their requests for reevaluation in line with reference (c).

6. Timelines.

a. Commands shall notify affected Service Members immediately upon release of this NAVADMIN.

b. In accordance with reference (b), Sailors have 10 business days to provide notice to their command that they will be providing an updated request that complies with the guidance in references (a) and (c). If Sailors do not provide notice within 10 business days, the command shall notify the member that they are not in compliance with the requirements in references (a) and (c). If a Sailor continues to fail to submit an updated request, the CO shall route the request for review in line with reference (c), noting the Sailor's noncompliance with reference (a).

c. Once the Sailor submits an updated request, the command shall process the RA request in accordance with reference (c), to include an updated chaplain review that aids commanders in assessing sincerity of the requestor's religious belief and accommodation requested.

d. Commands shall expeditiously evaluate and forward resubmitted packages to ensure all currently approved facial hair RAs are reevaluated within 30 days of receiving an updated request from the Service Member.

7. Points of contact for this NAVADMIN and Navy religious accommodations policy are the BUPERS-3 Religious Accommodation Program Team (RAPT) who can be reached via ALTN_N1_RAPT@us.navy.mil. Additional information and Instructions for submission as well as enclosures can be found at <https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Support-Services/Religious-Accommodations/>.

8. Upon release of the updated Secretary of the Navy instruction, I will release a follow-up NAVADMIN with comprehensive guidance on grooming standards in support of maximum lethality and survivability of our Naval forces.

9. This NAVADMIN will remain in effect until superseded or canceled, whichever occurs first.

10. Released by Vice Admiral Jeffrey J. Czerewko, Chief of Naval Personnel.//

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