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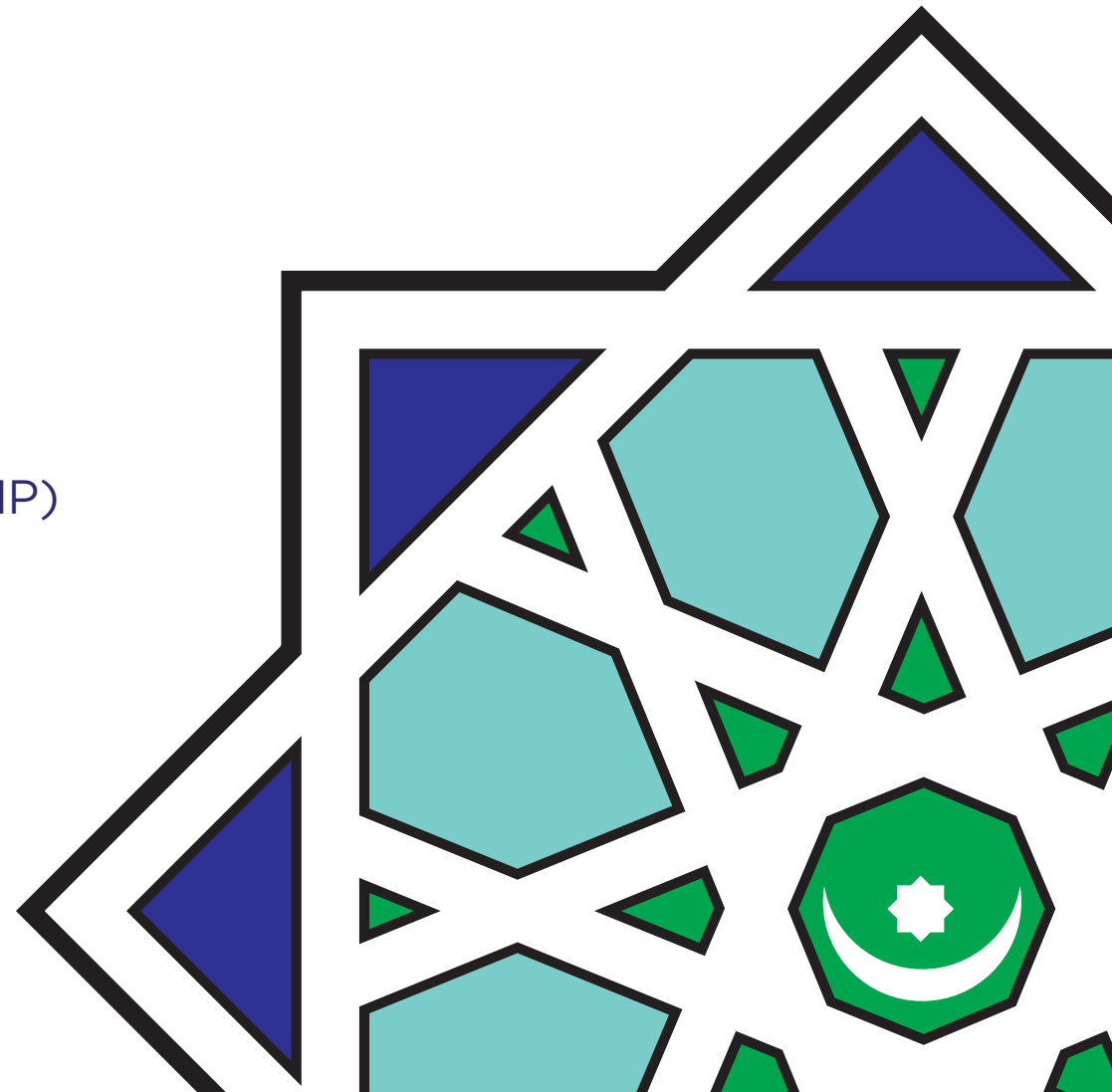
[muslim.police.uk](http://muslim.police.uk)

Prayer provisions

## **Workplace adjustments for Muslim officers and staff**

Guidance from the  
National Association of Muslim Police (NAMP)

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## Impact on Muslim officers and staff

Muslims require time to perform their five daily prayers within the allocated time frames for each respective prayer. Muslims observing their prayers make every effort to perform their obligatory prayers on time every day. Each prayer consists of certain units which vary according to the prayer. To perform these prayers, individuals need to be in a state of Wudhu (ablution).

Although many forces do have provisions for prayer, they are not always fit for purpose and there are often inconsistencies in the way staff are managed. There have been several instances where officers and staff have not been supported in performing prayers in duty time. This practice does not support diversity and inclusion principles, nor does it respect individual difference. Such practice has an adverse effect on wellbeing, our recruitment campaigns and the trust

and confidence of our communities as a diverse employer of choice.

This document provides guidance on prayer in Islam, effective practice for police forces supporting and facilitating provisions for Muslim officers and staff, and recommendations which can help create an inclusive environment with a sense of belonging.



**Officer praying in Masjid Al-Furqaan.**

# Prayers in Islam

## Overview

Prayer is the second pillar in Islam and is considered an obligatory religious duty for all Muslims. There are five prayers throughout the day which have specific time slots in which they can take place. This will vary throughout the year.

Each prayer varies in time and can last between 10 to 15 minutes.

- **Fajr** – Dawn, before sunrise.
- **Dhuhr** – Midday, after the sun passes its highest point.
- **Asr** – The later part of the afternoon.
- **Maghrib** – Just after sunset.
- **Isha** – Between sunset and midnight.

It is important to understand that the English word ‘prayer’ translates several ways in Islamic worship. A common term used by non-Arabic speakers is the word ‘namaz’, which has Persian origins and is used by several South Asian communities. The Arabic word for obligatory prayer is ‘salat’ or ‘salah’, which derives from the Arabic word meaning to connect. This relates to the connection established with Allah (God) during prayers. There are other terms used to describe non-obligatory prayers such as ‘dua’ meaning supplication and ‘dhikr’ which means remembrance and may take the form of chanting or meditation.

## Preparation for prayer

Prayer for Muslims is a physical as well as spiritual worship. Prior to prayer, Muslims need to ensure their clothes are clean and they will perform ritual ablutions known as Wudhu. This is a cleansing process with water for the preparation of prayer. It involves washing the hands, mouth nose, face, arms up to the elbows, hair, ears and feet.

## Performance of prayer

Once a Muslim enters the state of Salat, extracts from the Qur’an are recited and a series of movements are performed involving prostration onto the floor. This can be conducted alone or as part of a congregation. All Salat is prayed in the direction of the Ka’bah in Makkah, Saudi Arabia. This direction is called the Qiblah. Muslims should focus solely on the prayer once they have started so all concentration is on the Salat and nothing else.

## Mosques

The mosque is the Islamic place of congregational worship. It is also known as a 'masjid' which in Arabic means 'place of prostration'. Not all mosques in the UK are purpose built, many having been converted from other uses. No images, paintings or decorations which represent living beings are found inside a mosque. Shoes are removed to keep the mosque clean and ablution facilities are usually located by the entrance to a mosque. Salat is prayed in an open area which is often divided into male and female sections.

## Friday prayers

The Muslim holy day is on a Friday. The word 'Jumu'ah' means Friday in Arabic. Jumu'ah prayers (sometimes referred to as Friday prayers) are prayed in the afternoon instead of Dhuhr prayer. This must be conducted in a congregation and is the most attended regular prayer as it is seen as an obligation for most Muslims to attend the mosque at this time. A sermon is delivered prior to the prayer which is called the 'Khutbah'. On average the Khutbah lasts about 30 minutes and the Jumu'ah prayer lasts around 10 minutes. This will vary depending on the mosque. After the prayers it is common for members of the congregation to gather and greet each other as they are leaving the mosque.

## Eid prayers

The dates for religious festivals are not fixed as the Islamic calendar follows the lunar calendar. In Islam there are two main festivals known as Eid.

- Eid al-Fitr is celebrated on the first day of the Islamic month Shawwal. This marks the end of the month of Ramadan.
- Eid al-Adha is celebrated on the tenth day of Dhu al-Hijjah, which is the twelfth and final month in the Islamic calendar. The name of this month means 'possessor of pilgrimage' as this is the month in which Hajj (the Holy pilgrimage to Makkah) is performed.

Both these days have an extra prayer in the morning (usually sometime between 7am and 11am, depending on the mosque), which is prayed in addition to the five daily prayers. It is a considered a religious obligation for all Muslims to attend these prayers.

# Workplace adjustments for Muslim officers and staff

## Daily prayers

These prayers vary according to the seasons. For example in the summer period, the five daily prayers are distributed across longer daylight hours which allow for a wider prayer window as opposed to the shorter winter daylight hours where the prayers are closely packed together. The best practice for Muslims is to make every effort to attend mosques to perform all their daily prayers in congregation, however this is not always practical. Prayer facilities enable Muslims to fulfil their religious obligations to perform these prayers and are a reasonable workplace accommodation.

## Faith rooms

Muslim officers and staff tend to perform their prayers at lunch breaks and within their standard breaks throughout the day. Most forces have dedicated facilities – located at various sites – for prayers, but often these rooms are small and can only cater for a couple of people at any one time. Where there are a higher number of Muslims wishing to use the prayer room, a queue/delay is often caused, especially when break times coincide. Also (as a general rule) both sexes usually prefer separation during prayer (there are certain exceptions to this) and therefore males will wait until any female users have finished and vice versa. Movable partitions could be placed within prayer rooms to allow for more flexibility of use. All faith rooms should ideally be used for prayer and not a multi-purpose activity such as wellbeing, as this can sometimes cause

additional barriers to the performance of prayers. The sharing of the rooms with other faiths is welcomed as the use by all faiths will have a common element of the observation of prayer. Faith rooms should ideally have prayer mats, storage (for any religious items), a comfortable chair/sofa, no images of people or animals on the walls, space for prostration and should be free from clutter. They also need clear markings with the Qiblah (direction for prayer). A sticker of an arrow on the ceiling showing the correct direction is best practice. In the UK the direction of the Qiblah is southeast.

## **Ablution facilities**

Ideally Muslims will require a seated washing facility to perform their ablution (Wudhu). The washing facility should be located either within the prayer rooms (behind the direction of prayer) or nearby. Common practice involves Muslim staff using disabled or general toilets. This can sometimes cause other users and the Muslim individual to feel embarrassed and uncomfortable.

Wudhu involves washing certain parts of the body. For example, it requires the individual to wash their feet. The absence of appropriate facilities for this, and the other steps of Wudhu, means that ablutions (often done at a sink in a toilet facility) can result in water spillage and may be deemed to be a health and safety issue. Many Muslims recognise this and clean up the area after use, however toilet facilities as the only option for performing Wudhu is

not ideal. When possible, forces should take a pragmatic approach and provide Wudhu facilities to support their Muslim officers and staff. In addition to the Wudhu facility, it is common practice for Muslims to use water to wash when using toilets. Consideration should be given towards providing toilets that have a built-in bidet or similar.

## **Time required**

In general terms, approximately 15 minutes should cover the time required for each prayer. This would include the performing of the ablution and prayer. However, location of ablution and prayers facilities in relation to the individual's workstation/place may mean more time is required.



**Wudu performed in Shipley police station.**



## Friday prayers

These prayers are considered a religious obligation and take place within mosques or similar dedicated premises where large gatherings are held for prayer.

Unlike other daily prayers, Friday (Jumu'ah) prayer must be performed in congregation, led by a suitably qualified Imam and cannot be made up later once missed. Supervisors should look favourably to support Muslim officers and staff wanting to attend these prayers wherever possible. The total abstraction should be approximately 40 minutes but travel time to and from the mosque also needs to be taken into consideration. General practice is for Muslim officers and staff wishing to attend Friday prayers to do so during their lunch break. Flexible working arrangements can also be an option to cater for the needs of Muslims choosing to observe their religious obligations. As an example, Muslim staff may choose to work shorter weeks and condensed

hours or adjusted shift patterns so they do not miss their Friday prayers. Where operationally possible, line managers should accommodate this.

The current practice varies from force to force and, although functional, there are health and safety risks to be considered for officers carrying protective equipment. Policy or guidance is recommended to safeguard Muslim officers and police support community officers (PCSOs) choosing to attend prayers and the line managers who support them.

Officers and PCSOs attending Friday prayers while on duty may need to remove kit to perform ablutions and prayer. Their radios are also turned off while engaging in prayer. These decisions are subjectively and dynamically made by the individual officers and to date this has worked without any adverse implications or risks.



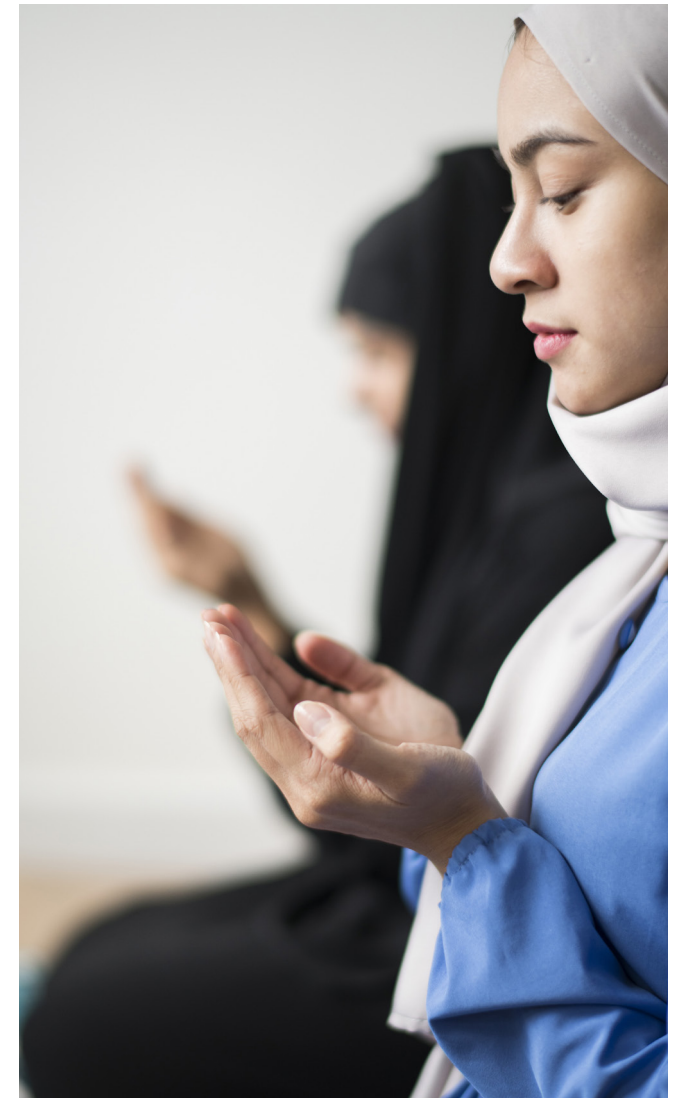
**Congregational prayer in the West Midlands.**

## Eid prayers

Muslim officers and staff will need to attend Eid prayers as it is a compulsory faith requirement and the prayer itself is actually the integral part of the Eid celebration. Therefore if Muslims are unable to perform their Eid prayers for whatever reason they will feel that they have missed out on Eid and will have to wait until the following year to get the opportunity to perform them. Every effort should be made to support Muslim officers and staff to attend Eid prayers which take place between sunrise and midday. There are several congregations held at different times within this period to cater for the large numbers that attend the mosques. Ideally most Muslims will book time off for Eid providing approximate dates in advance as the exact dates are not confirmed until the night before Eid. This is because the determination of Eid is dependent upon the sighting of the

new moon. Annual leave requests for Eid should form part of any workforce planning meetings and requests should be approved well in advance so as to avoid last minute staffing level issues.

In the rare event of Muslim officers or staff having their leave refused then there should be the opportunity and some flexibility to be abstracted for an hour or so, to allow them to perform their Eid prayers. The time allowance, including travel and performing prayer, does not vary much from the Friday prayers, except the numbers in attendance are far greater so there may be more traffic, congestion and parking issues.



**Dua performed after salat.**



# NAMP recommendations

Balancing Islamic criteria with organisational obligations around health and safety, the NAMP supports the following recommendations for Muslim officers and staff:

## Recommendations for all Muslim officers and staff

- Local agreement with supervision should be arranged regarding abstraction for prayers.
- Early notification of leave requests should be provided for days such as Eid to ensure cover can be arranged.

## Recommendations for operational Muslim officers and staff

- Officers and staff are responsible for their protective equipment at all times.
- Officers and staff take their radios with them and only switch them off during the actual performance of prayers unless in urgent emergency situations.

- Officers and staff notify their control rooms of their attendance and inform their colleagues so as to be assigned to this.
- Officers and staff consider wearing disposal shoe coverings as used by some forensics staff. This should be at the discretion of the individual officer, who will be best placed to make an informed decision.
- Officers and staff perform their prayers at the rear/side of the congregation to allow for easy exit if required and to also act as reassurance for the congregation, especially at heightened times of vulnerability.



**Salat in the multi-faith room in Shipley police station.**

## Recommendations for supervision

- Supervisors are advised to support officers and staff by allowing them at least an hour in which to travel and take their lunch break.
- Muslim officers and staff wanting to attend Friday prayers should be supported without adverse impact on their work entitlements/rights/practices. It is advised that officers and staff taking longer than an hour inclusive of travel and lunch break should make up the excess time.
- Supervisors should consult with their Muslim officers and staff to see if there are any workplace adjustments required for prayers, considering all options available. Written agreements should be in place to ensure consistency.
- Supervisors are encouraged to look favourably on requests for time

off for Eid. If the Muslim officer or staff member is working, workplace adjustments should be considered for the opportunity to be abstracted for the duration of Eid prayer at the nearest location available (including time for travel and time taken to observe Eid).

## Recommendations for prayer and ablution facilities

- Faith rooms should be considered in all workplaces, particularly with new builds, larger stations, training premises and areas with significant numbers of Muslim officers and staff.
- Provisions for prayer should be provided and the room should be fit for purpose.
- Ablution facilities should be considered and installed within or in close vicinity of faith rooms.



**Leicestershire Police FHQ multi-faith room.**

# Benefits of the recommendations

- Clear demonstration of inclusivity by forces, delivering against their equality, diversity and inclusion strategies.
- Aid retention of officers and staff feeling a sense of belonging.
- Lead to significant enhancement in internal trust and confidence.
- Gives real meaning to the Peelian Principle: 'the police are the community', and enhances external trust and confidence, especially among disaffected communities.
- Positive impact on recruitment campaigns.
- Fosters good relations in line with our equality duty.
- Greater likelihood of improved community intelligence and cooperation.





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## About the College

We're the professional body for the police service in England and Wales.

Working together with everyone in policing, we share the skills and knowledge officers and staff need to prevent crime and keep people safe.

We set the standards in policing to build and preserve public trust and we help those in policing develop the expertise needed to meet the demands of today and prepare for the challenges of the future.

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## About the National Association of Muslim Police (NAMP)

NAMP was established to create a stronger network for Muslim officers and staff to address inequality and unfairness within the police service. It is a constituted body that includes police officers of all ranks, police staff, police community support officers and special constables. NAMP's aims include promoting understanding and awareness of Islam, supporting learning and development for its members and strengthening community cohesion.

[muslim.police.uk](http://muslim.police.uk)



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