

How does Corrections Victoria record my religious status?

Chaplains are available to talk with everyone. To ensure prisoners receive support from the Chaplain of their faith, each person's religion is recorded when they are received into prison custody. It is also recorded if you prefer to not practise any religion.

If you believe that your recorded religious status may be incorrect, please contact the RLC or unit staff.

What should I do if I am worried about the practise of my faith at this prison?

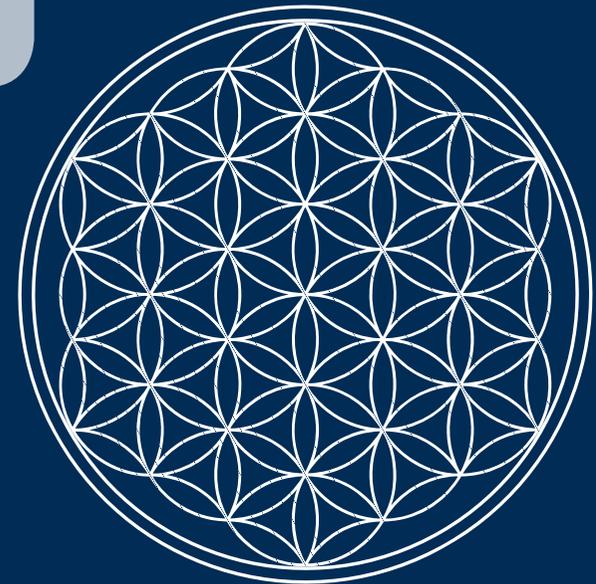
If you have concerns about the practise of your religion or faith, you can request to speak with the Programs/Offender Services Manager, unit staff or the RLC.

What if I still have questions about Chaplaincy services at this prison?

If you have more questions, you may contact either one of the Chaplains, a Prison Officer, a member of the Programs team or the RLC.

Department of Justice

Religious and Spiritual Support Services in Corrections Victoria Prisons



We understand that being in prison can be difficult. You can feel stressed and confused. It can seem like no-one cares and you are alone. Talking to a Chaplain can help.

Corrections Victoria ensures that you are able to receive spiritual support while you are in prison, by providing Chaplaincy services. Chaplains are people who can support you as you go through difficult times. Chaplains care about what's gone on in your life and will listen to you without judging you.

They will pray for you, and with you, if you want them to. Sometimes people find that even if they have not prayed for a long time, it's the right time to start again when they are in prison.

This leaflet answers some of the main questions you might have about Chaplaincy in prisons.

Who can I talk to if I need religious and spiritual support?

Chaplains from the Anglican Church, Roman Catholic Church, Salvation Army, Uniting Church and the Islamic Council of Victoria visit each prison on a regular basis.

Buddhist, Greek Orthodox and Jewish Chaplains also visit each prison as required.

You can contact your case worker or the prison's Programs/Offender Services Manager if you would like to see a Chaplain from any of these faiths, or feel free to approach the Chaplains yourself when you see them in the prison.

Check the noticeboard for times of the Church services and Prayer times. Usually, the Chaplains will make sure that worship services are held on different days so that you have the best chance of being available when they are on.

What do I do if I follow a religion different to those represented by the Chaplains?

If you follow a religion other than those represented by prison Chaplains, you can ask to see a leader of your own faith community by writing to the General Manager or Programs/Offender Services Manager.

In the letter you should say which religion you follow, and supply the contact details of a qualified member of your faith community. If you do not know this information, the Regional Liaison Chaplain (RLC) will try to arrange for someone of your faith to visit you. If approved by the prison, this person will visit you through the Professional Visits program. Please ask unit staff or one of the Chaplains to contact the RLC if your need help with this.

What is a Regional Liaison Chaplain?

The RLC ensures that everyone has access to Chaplains and worship services. It does not matter what faith you follow, as the RLC is there to help people of all faiths. The RLC is a good person to remember if you need help contacting your own Chaplain.

What if I want to see my own minister / religious visitor?

If you wish, you can see your own Minister or religious visitor by listing that person on your visits list for approval as a personal visitor.

Are conversations with a Chaplain confidential?

Almost all conversations with Chaplains are confidential. Chaplains are only required to advise prison management of conversations when someone has told them anything that poses a serious threat to the security and good order of the prison, or a risk to themselves or another person.

What kinds of support can a Chaplain offer?

Some of the things that the Chaplains can offer include:

- opportunities for worship
- talking with you when you are upset, worried or anxious
- providing a link between you and your family, especially in difficult times
- religious education
- spiritual support
- pastoral care, whether you are in crisis or not
- helping you get religious books and other items eg. prayer mats, Rosary Beads, Bible or Qur'an etc
- advocacy for when you have issues relating to your wellbeing
- helping you maintain contact with your family and the community; and
- referring you to other agencies for support

What rights do I have to practice my religion in prison?

The Corrections Act 1986 states that every prisoner has "the right to practise a religion of the prisoner's choice and, if consistent with prison security and good prison management to join with other prisoners in practising that religion and to possess such articles as are necessary for the practice of that religion".

Every person has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief, as outlined in the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.