



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

April 2, 2007

Mr. Amardeep Singh
Executive Director
Sikh Coalition
396 Broadway, Suite 701
New York, NY 10013

Dear Mr. Singh:

We are pleased to inform you that effective immediately, we are implementing an interim FPS policy on religious accommodations, amending the FPS contract security guard grooming standards, pending the promulgation of a more formal policy. We have already begun the process of notifying our Regional Directors and the responsible contracting officers, and request your assistance in identifying those locations where individuals have allegedly been denied employment because of the impact of these standards.

As a law enforcement organization, FPS has a significant and legitimate interest in maintaining its professional appearance, uniformity, and esprit de corps. These are essential not just to the performance of our national security mission, but to the public's confidence that they will be safe when we are on guard. Courts, including the Supreme Court, have granted law enforcement agencies considerable deference in their application of such standards in the past, even in the face of individual religious obligations. We have concluded, however, that we can accommodate both the concerns of your constituents and our essential obligations to protect the public and its property.

Effective today, it is FPS policy to grant, and that FPS contractors must grant, reasonable accommodations to the religious practices of individual security guards, without regard to an individual's religious preference.

As you understand, of course, accommodations must be consistent with legal and constitutional standards and essential mission requirements, especially those affecting the safety of guards and members of the public. An accommodated religious practice must not suggest government endorsement of any particular faith, must not reasonably appear to propagate the individual's faith to members of the public, must not significantly undermine the public's confidence in FPS, must not create a significant risk to the safety of the guard or the public, and must not conflict with mission-essential job task requirements. Finally, we must implement this policy in accordance with the Federal Acquisition Regulation. Subject to those limitations, we do not believe that the wearing of unshorn hair

Mr. Amardeep Singh

Page 2 of 2

and beards, turbans, or kirpans should be a barrier to employment as an FPS security guard in the future.

1. FPS contract security guards may carry objects of religious significance that the individual's faith requires the individual to carry on his person, provided the object is worn discreetly – under the uniform whenever possible – and does not interfere with the wearing of the uniform. FPS will permit any guard authorized to carry a firearm to carry a kirpan of reasonable length, when worn discreetly under the uniform. A guard who carries the kirpan must notify his employer that he is carrying it, and should address any questions about the right to carry it to his employer, who will receive specific guidance from FPS.

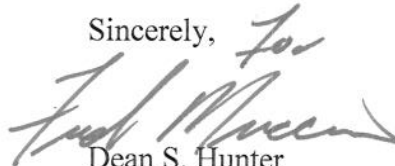
2. FPS contract security guards will be granted reasonable accommodations to security guard grooming standards, such as haircut and shaving standards. A security guard receiving an accommodation must nonetheless maintain as neat and professional an appearance as religious requirements permit. Whenever possible, hair in excess of regulation length should be worn under a uniform hat or appropriate religious headgear. Facial hair exceeding regulation length should be neatly combed.

3. Religious headgear must be consistent with the colors of the duty uniform, should be no larger than required by an individual's religious requirements, and may be required to bear the insignia and other distinctive markings of the uniform for ease of emergency identification.

4. Requests for religious accommodations must be submitted through the security guard's employer in writing, and should briefly explain why the accommodation is requested.

Thank you again for your cooperation and collegiality.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dean S. Hunter". The signature is stylized and written over the printed name.

Dean S. Hunter
Assistant Director