



RAMADHAN FACTSHEET - 2013

These notes are intended for managers and staff who work with individuals that are Muslim. It is intended to increase understanding about the month of Ramadhan and offers advice on how to be supportive of colleagues among you that are fasting.

Ramadhan starts (in most places) on Wednesday 10 July 2013 and will last for 29 or 30 days depending on the sighting of the moon. During the 29/30 days of Ramadan all adult Muslims must give up the following things during the hours of daylight (which this year is approximately between 2 AM and 9.30 PM):

- Food or drink of any sort.
- Smoking, including passive smoking.
- Sexual activity.

At the beginning of Ramadhan Muslims will greet each other by either saying “Ramadhan Mubarak” which roughly translated means “have a blessed Ramadhan” or “Ramadhan Kareem” which roughly translated means “have a bountiful Ramadhan”. Putting an appropriate message for Muslim staff and/or customers on your website, in the reception area or in your newsletter will be very well received. Something like this would be appropriate:

“The very best wishes to our Muslim customers/staff/colleagues for the holy month of Ramadhan”.

“Wishing all our Muslim customers/staff/colleagues a peaceful, blessed and fulfilling Ramadhan”.

These messages can be prefixed by either Ramadhan Mubarak or Ramadhan Kareem.

During Ramadhan Muslims will awake before dawn for a meal called "suhur". When daylight is over, most Muslims will break the fast with dates or water. This will be followed by an evening meal called “iftar”. During Ramadhan iftar is an occasion for family, friends and community get together.

The fasting combined with disturbances in normal sleep pattern can leave individuals feeling a little more tired than normal particularly towards the end of the day. Also towards the latter part of the day some individuals that are fasting might feel a little light headed.

An agreement to requests for slight adjustments to the working day during Ramadhan will be appreciated by Muslim staff members.



It is very considerate to avoid holding events, such as staff meals, away days and get togethers, during Ramadan. If it is unavoidable please do not be offended if Muslim staff members are unable to participate in such events. If an away day or staff conference is unavoidable any special arrangements for Muslim staff that are fasting will be greatly appreciated.

It is not necessary for individuals that are not fasting to abstain from eating or drinking in the presence of Muslims that are fasting. If you make a point of asking to be excused for eating whilst your colleague is fasting this will be appreciated. Please refrain from smoking in the presence of someone who is fasting although this is now a lot less of an issue with the ban on smoking in public places.

It is common for non-Muslim staff to forget that a Muslim colleague is fasting and to offer a drink or to offer to pick up a sandwich at lunchtime for example. It is understood by Muslims that this will occur and will not cause any offence whatsoever.

During the month of Ramadhan it is not appropriate to ask a Muslim staff member to engage in activity that eating and drinking is a central part of. So for example a business lunch or networking event that food and drink is an important part of should be avoided. This will have the effect of causing discomfort or appear odd to non-Muslims when they are eating and the Muslim staff member is present but abstains from food and drink.

Muslim staff enjoy sitting down together and sharing their food when they end the fast (iftar). They welcome non-Muslim staff participating in this although this might not be possible this year given the fact that the fast ends so late in the day. This is totally appropriate and will please the individuals concerned rather than cause offence.

To fast along with Muslim colleagues, even for part of the day, is a good way of enhancing understanding. Muslims are entirely happy to speak about fasting and the month of Ramadhan so do not be frightened of asking them about anything that you are not sure about or curious about.

If you want to make a good gesture towards Muslim staff buy them a packet of dates. When daylight is over, most Muslims will break the fast with dates or water, following the example of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), before having a proper meal later.

Many Muslims will become more religious during Ramadhan than they might be for the remainder of the year. As a consequence of this Muslim staff might wish to offer prayers during the day. This year, in 2013, given the length of the day this is likely to be once a day. When Ramadhan falls in other months this could be for 2/3 times a day for a few minutes each for which the staff member (s) will require a private area.

A few points to remember in terms of service provision:



- Try to avoid carrying out visits to Muslim clients around the time that they will be preparing to end the fast (iftar). This year, in 2013, that is unlikely to be an issue as the fast end time is quite late around 9.30 PM.
- Try to avoid visits very early in the morning as many Muslims stay up late engaged in acts of worship during Ramadhan and therefore might prefer to awake a little later.
- Please avoid any major events in which you are trying to engage with Muslim clients such as consultation forums.
- From the perspective of a housing organisation Ramadhan is not the best time of the year to carry out a major works programme and certainly anything that renders the kitchen out of use is out of the question.

The end of Ramadhan is marked by the festival of Eid for which Muslim staff members will wish to take at least a day's leave from work. The actual day that Eid falls on will depend on when the new moon is sighted. For this reason it might not be possible for the staff member to be very specific about the day he/she would like to be away from work and therefore some flexibility is necessary.

The appropriate way to express best wishes to a Muslim for Eid is to say "Eid Mubarak". Roughly translated this means have a blessed festival for the day of Eid. As mentioned earlier in relation to the beginning of Ramadhan putting an appropriate message for Muslim staff and/or customers on your website, in the reception area or in your newsletter will be very well received. Something like this would be appropriate:

"Wishing our Muslim customers/staff/colleagues and their families the very best for Eid".

"Wishing our Muslim customers/staff/colleagues a very happy and peaceful Eid".