



Purpose of discussion

Ramadan begins on the 26 May 2017 and ends on 24 June 2017 – this is one of the five pillars of Islam and is a time of fasting for Muslims around the world. It is essentially when all adult Muslims give up the following things during daylight hours;

- Food or drink of any sort
- Smoking
- Sexual activity

During Ramadan most Muslims will eat a meal before dawn, and then again when daylight is over. No food or drink is consumed during the day and it is important we recognise the impact on an individual, as well as the opportunities available to them for support during the month of Ramadan.

Kick-off the discussion

This year Ramadan covers the longest day of the year and, what happens when a person fasts, particularly when it is being practised during summer months when the days are longer, is something that we should all be aware of so we can look out for each other in the work place.

Discussion points

Use the questions below to facilitate discussion. Remember, you don't have to have all the answers – the role of the facilitator is to create an engaging discussion where everyone identifies and commits to solutions.

Discussion points	Supporting notes
<p>1. How could fasting affect someone in the workplace?</p>	<p>Some of the effects of fasting could include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dizziness or light-headedness• Headaches• Tiredness• Heat related issues e.g. heat stroke, heat exhaustion• Reduced concentration• Irritability <p>These will not be the same for everyone, and some people may show no effects. It is different from person to person.</p>
<p>2. What can I do to help?</p>	<p>You can support fasting colleagues by;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talk about fasting in team meetings, acknowledge that it is coming up and make sure your other colleagues are aware of it.• Encourage discussion so that a fasting colleague feels they can come to you if they need some support. The person who is fasting will know how it may affect them and will be the best person to tell you about this. Don't make assumptions.• Be sensitive to what fasting means and look out for each other when out on track.



Discussion points

3. What adjustments can be made?

Supporting notes

It is worth noting that fasting can have positive effects on an individual's health and wellbeing. The effects of fasting are different for everybody.

Due to the lack of food and drink, fatigue is a potential effect of fasting, and risk assessments for work should take this into account.

It is important for someone fasting to discuss this with their line manager – flexible working and other adjustments could be considered to make it easier for the individual. This could include;

- Being shifted to work nightshifts to allow rest during the day
- Working through breaks to finish earlier in the day
- Physically demanding tasks could be rescheduled, or planned for earlier in the day
- Prevent, where possible, travel away from home/site during Ramadan

Additional support

Find out more about fasting on Connect - <http://connect/CorporateServices/HRonline/DIP/DIP.aspx>

Contact the Diversity and Inclusion Team - diversityandinclusion@networkrail.co.uk

Read the Managing religion in the workplace guidance -

<http://connectdocs/NetworkRail/Documents/CorporateServices/HR/DIP/Everyone%20-Managing%20Religion%20in%20the%20Workplace%2016042014.pdf>