

Ramadan

An Inclusive Workplace Guide



Women and Gender
Equality Canada

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des genres Canada



This guide is intended to inform Kingston employers about Ramadan so they can create a more inclusive workplace where Muslim employees feel a sense of belonging. It is also useful for all employees who want to learn more about Ramadan and engage respectfully with their Muslim colleagues.

What is Ramadan?

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar. During Ramadan, many Muslims around the world fast and engage in spiritual reflection, prayer, and acts of charity. It is followed by **Eid al-Fitr**, a celebration that may last up to three days, during which Muslims spend time with family and friends and take part in communal prayers and increased charitable giving.

Quick Facts About Ramadan

- Because Ramadan follows the lunar calendar, it occurs about **10 – 11 days earlier** each year in the Gregorian calendar.
- Fasting begins at **dawn** and ends at **sunset**.
- During the fast, individuals refrain from all **food** and **drink**, including **water**.
- The pre-dawn meal eaten before the daily fast begins is called **suhoor**.
- The meal eaten at sunset to break the fast is called **iftar**.
- **Not** all Muslims fast, and some do not fast every day of Ramadan.



Plan Ahead and Acknowledge

Because the dates of Ramadan and Eid change each year make the effort to plan ahead by noting them on workplace calendars. You can also send a thoughtful acknowledgment message for Ramadan, especially when considering any flexibility you can offer. Doing so signals belonging and helps individuals and teams plan accordingly, easing the burden on Muslim employees.

How **Ramadan** May Affect Employees at Work

- Lower energy levels in the afternoon.
- Adjusted or disrupted sleep routines.
- Choosing not to attend food-themed events during the day.
- Preference for a quiet space for prayers.
- Requiring brief breaks for prayer.

How to Support Your Employees During **Ramadan**

Plan With Intention

- Be mindful of food-centric meetings (e.g., “Lunch & Learn” events)
- Avoid meetings near iftar as much as possible.
- Limit or make food-based events optional.

Offer Flexibility

- Adjust start and end times when and if possible.
- Offer shift flexibility or a short break at sunset to allow employees to break their fast.
- Accommodate a remote or hybrid schedule if the work allows for it.

Be Thoughtful About Workload

- Avoid long presentations or physically demanding tasks late in the day as much as possible.

Beyond Energy and Fasting

- Provide space for prayers. A small, private room is often enough.



Stay Respectfully Curious

Curiosity may be welcomed and appreciated when it's respectful, so be mindful of what you assume and say.

It's okay if you and your staff are not yet familiar with Ramadan. You can take the opportunity to learn more about it. This guide is a great starting point!

What NOT to Say Avoid these kinds of comments, as they may unintentionally feel dismissive or intrusive to someone observing Ramadan.	What You CAN Say Instead Say things or ask questions that show respectful curiosity and support.
You can skip fasting for work. ✗	<i>Ramadan Mubarak!</i> or <i>Ramadan Kareem!</i> ✓
Not even water? ✗	How is your Ramadan going? ✓
It must be hard for you. ✗	Wishing you a blessed Ramadan! ✓
Is that even healthy? ✗	Do you have any plans for Eid? ✓

Be Mindful of Not Making Assumptions

Not all Muslims fast, for various reasons.
Avoid making assumptions or putting anyone on the spot.

The End of Ramadan: *Eid al-Fitr*



Eid al-Fitr marks the end of Ramadan. Eid celebrations often include a morning prayer, charitable giving (Zakat al-Fitr), festive meals with family and friends, and the giving of small gifts or money, especially for children. Some employees may request at least one day off to observe the holiday. Make reasonable efforts to accommodate these requests. Even those who do not fast may still celebrate Eid with their families.

Inclusive practices during Ramadan strengthen understanding and belonging across your team. Thank you for taking the time to learn and support your Muslim employees and colleagues.