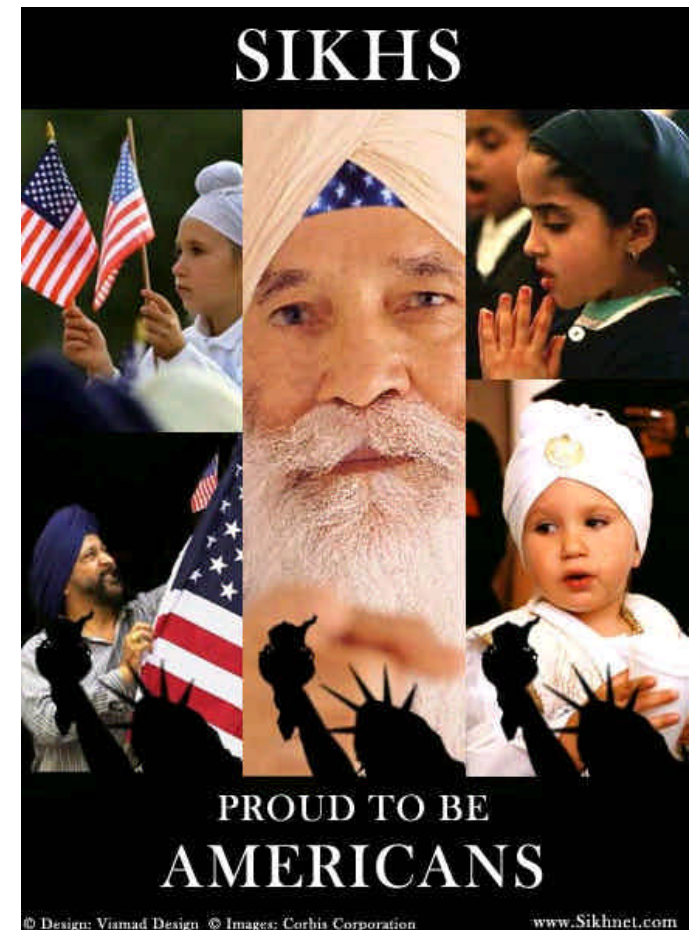




SIKHS & AIRPORT SECURITY

Agenda

- Sikhs in America
- Values and Beliefs
- September 11, 2001
- Articles of Sikh Faith
- Understanding a Sikh Turban
- Airport Security Procedures
- FAA Policies
- Questions



Sikhs in America

- World's 5th largest religion, and over 500 years old
- 22 million followers worldwide
- One million Sikhs live in North America
- Sikhs have lived in America for over 100 years
- Sikhism is a distinct religion, not Hinduism or Islam
- People who wear turbans in the US are Sikhs



Sikhs Believe in:



- The US Constitution, and American freedoms & values
- Defending civil liberties and protecting the defenseless against injustice
- Tolerance and absolute equality of all people without regard to gender, race, caste, or religion
- One God, common to all
- High integrity, hard work, humility and service to humanity

Sikhs DO NOT Believe In

- Sikhs **do not** believe in terrorism or hurting innocent people
- Sikhs **do not** believe in hate or racial profiling
- Sikhs **do not** believe in holy wars or crusades
- Sikhs **do not** believe that their religion is superior to others

Tragedy of September 11th

- Sikhs grieve with America. Like many Americans, Sikhs lost friends, loved ones and colleagues
- Sikhs unequivocally condemn all terrorist attacks
- At the WTC, Sikh doctors were first on the scene, helping to save many lives
- Sikhs continue to donate blood, food, and money, and participate in memorial services



Victims of September 11th

- **Victims:** Sikhs have been victims of a hate backlash and harassment because of their distinctive appearance
- **Profiling:** Sikhs have been victims of racial profiling at airports & on highways
- **Discrimination:** Harassment, racial profiling and employment discrimination is making it much harder for Sikhs to wear turbans and other articles of faith - a basic Constitutional right



*Mr. Balbir
Sodhi was
killed in
Arizona*

Articles of Sikh Faith

- **Kesh** - uncut hair: Sikhs do not cut hair or beards to remain in the image that God gave us.
- **Kuchha** – under-shorts (boxers) to represent modesty and fidelity
- **Kanga** - comb, made of wood - to keep uncut hair neat and clean
- **Kara** - bracelet, made of steel worn on right hand – a reminder of noble actions, a symbol of eternity
- **Kirpan** - ceremonial small blunt sword symbolizing freedom, liberty and justice



Sikh Turban

- Covers long, uncut hair
- Approximately 15 feet of cloth wrapped neatly around the head every time it is put on
- Symbolizes discipline, integrity, humility, and spirituality
- Religious requirement - **Must be worn at all times in public**
- Mideast headcoverings are different
- 99% of people with turbans in US are Sikhs **not** Muslims or Hindus



Kirpan

- Represents Sikh duty to uphold justice, symbolizes courage, willingness to sacrifice for freedom
- Sikhs are very concerned with safety and security and are willing to check in their kirpans before traveling
- If you see a kirpan at a security check point please handle it with respect, as it is an important religious symbol
- Please treat as an accidental oversight - occasionally Sikhs may forget that they have it with them



Sikhs Support FAA Policies

- Sikhs ask for equal treatment under the law
- Airport personnel must observe FAA policies
- FAA policy states that a turban removal should only be a last resort. Procedures are as follows:
 - If randomly selected for additional screening, use handheld metal detector
 - If handheld metal detector is triggered at or over the head, request a manual pat down of the turban
 - If the manual pat down suggests a prohibited item is concealed, request Sikh to remove turban as a last resort

Handling a Turban with Care

- Sikhs feel severely humiliated if asked to remove their turban in public, as this breaks a sacred covenant with God and exposes an intimate part of the body
- If turban removal is required, provide a clean private area with lighting and a mirror
- Treat the turban with respect and don't allow it to fall or be placed on floor.
- Allow at least 10 minutes for the turban to be retied in a private place

FAA Policies

- Profiling is a violation of the Equal Protection Clause, Religious Freedom Restoration Act, Fourth Amendment and other federal, state and local provisions
- Use the “but/for” test to determine the justification for your actions
- Ask yourself, *But for this person’s perceived race, ethnic heritage or religious orientation, would I have subjected this individual to additional safety or security scrutiny?*
- If the answer is “NO,” then the action violates civil rights laws

Airport Security Sensitivity

- Sikhs wholeheartedly support the need for heightened national security
- Turbans are a mandatory part of Sikh faith
- It is very insulting and disrespectful to a Sikh to remove his or her turban
- Turban removal is a partial strip search
- A turban is not a hat. It cannot be casually taken on and off. It must be carefully retied each time it is removed
- Please treat the turban with utmost respect

Summary

- Sikhs strongly condemn terrorism
- Sikhs are law-abiding US citizens, with strong values of justice, equality and liberty for all
- Sikhs wear turbans and beards as a mandatory requirement of their faith
- Sikhs support FAA security measures
- Sikhs deserve and expect equal treatment under the law
- Questions?

Thank You!



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