



WAYS TO CREATE AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT

1. Get Educated.

Ensure staff who supervise colleagues who celebrate Diwali or Bandi Chhor Divas are aware of the festivities and how they can be supportive.

2. Intentional Planning.

Avoid booking meetings and scheduling events immediately before or after October 27, 2019 particularly if attendees celebrate Diwali or Bandi Chhor Divas.

3. Be Flexible.

Accommodate requests for time off for religious observances. If shift work is the norm, employees may want to swap shifts to observe the festivities. Look for solutions that suit all parties.

4. Be Thoughtful.

Often people who celebrate Diwali will want to share this tradition and bring treats for the office. If colleagues want to celebrate on this day, please be considerate about this.

5. Don't Make Assumptions.

Not all Hindu, Jain, Sikh or Buddhist colleagues may take the time off, but they may still observe in various ways.

Festivals of Diwali and Bandi Chhor Divas

For Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, and Buddhists in the Workplace

Diwali (also known as Deepavali or Dipavali) is celebrated by Hindus, Jains, Sikhs and Buddhists. Hindus celebrate Diwali on the day of the New Moon in the month of Kartika, the holiest month in the Hindu lunar calendar. It always falls between the middle of October and the middle of November. Typically observed on the third day of the multi-day festival, this year, Diwali will be celebrated on October 27, 2019.

The word Diwali is a variation of the Sanskrit word Deepavali and refers to the rows of earthen lamps or “diyas” that families place around their homes. Hindus believe that the light from these lamps symbolizes the illumination within the individual. Diwali is also referred to as the festival of lights and celebrates the victory of good over evil, light over darkness and knowledge over ignorance. During Diwali, families offer prayers at home or at the Mandir, (Hindu temple) for a better year filled with wealth, peace and prosperity. Families come together to celebrate, prepare festive meals, light fireworks, and exchange gifts. A common greeting to mark the occasion is “Happy Diwali” or “Diwali Mubarak”.

Diwali, which coincides with the Hindu New Year, celebrates hope and new beginnings, though each faith has its own reason to celebrate.

Jains celebrate Diwali to mark the attainment of moksha, or nirvana. It is believed that many gods were present on the night when Mahavira reached moksha, and that their presence illuminated the darkness.

Sikhs mark Bandi Chhor Divas (Day of Liberation) on Diwali, when Guru Har Gobind Ji freed himself and the Hindu kings from Fort Gwalior and arrived at the Golden Temple in Amritsar. Today, Bandi Chhor Divas is commemorated with the fireworks and lighting of the Golden Temple in India and local Gurudwaras (Sikh temples).