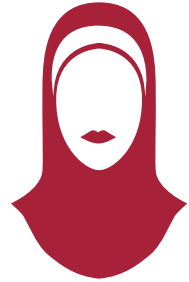
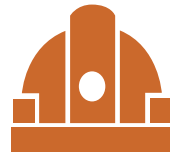
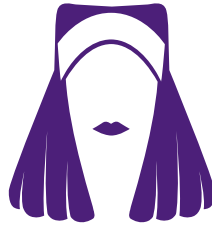


Diversity Matters

Multi-Faith Room Provision
in the Workplace

JANUARY 23



A Guide to Best Practice Multi-Faith Room Design
for employers, property owners/managers, facilities
managers, architects, building designers, specifiers,
and interior designers.

WuduMate®



MOBILE



COMPACT



CLASSIC



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Acknowledgements & Endorsements

We would like to express our sincere thanks to the following organisations who have provided invaluable advice and guidance in the preparation of Diversity Matters:

- The Regents Park Mosque, London
- Legal advice from B. P. Collins Solicitors

In addition to advice and guidance the following gave our guide their endorsement:

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- Rabbi Dr Michael Shire, Vice-Principal, Leo Baeck College

International Applicability of Diversity Matters

A well-documented past of international forays in the days of the British Empire, is largely responsible for the UK today having a truly multi-racial society back at home. The United Kingdom is probably the most advanced country in the world in terms of its acceptance of diversity in the workplace, although much of the developed world is following closely behind, with largely similar approaches to Health & Safety and integration of minority groups in the workplace.

This version of 'Diversity Matters' (V12 2021), has been prepared based primarily on accepted UK policies and references to UK legislation, much of the content however will apply similarly to other countries, if not today, almost certainly in the future.

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1. The Challenge of Diversity

Across the world populations are increasingly multicultural and multi-ethnic. Our places of work, hospitals, universities and colleges are emphatically multicultural. It is a well-established reality that staff, patients, students and visitors can be expected to come from a dazzling array of cultural backgrounds and faiths and as such, we must accommodate them.

Such diversity raises a range of challenges for employers, property owners and managers, facilities managers, architects and interior designers. Not least of these challenges is the moral and, increasingly, legal obligation to recognise social and religious diversity in the facilities provided in the workplace. Increasingly legislation extends these obligations, which previously only applied to employers, to include all providers of goods, facilities and services to public bodies and private organisations.

In the UK, The Confederation of British Industry notes:

“Employers recognise the benefits of effective diversity and inclusion policies, and the business community supports positive action. The one resource that in today’s knowledge-based economy gives sustainable competitive advantage is the skills, understanding and experience of people. Discrimination in employment, wherever it exists, squanders effort, ideas and, ultimately, business sales. It leads to wasted potential, wasted labour and wasted revenues”.

Although there is no shortage of information on the general topic of diversity there is a distinct lack of practical, down-to-earth guidance on what that means in our places of work and study and the places we visit such as hospitals and other public buildings. Typical grey areas include:

- What are the day-to-day implications of diversity we need to grapple with when considering the provisions made for staff and visitors?
- How do we ‘design in’ to our new buildings the demands of diversity?
- How can we try to reflect these demands and expectations in existing buildings?

This guide is intended to try to meet this information need.

In particular, this guide is intended to provide practical guidance on the provision of multi-faith facilities to those responsible for the design and management of public and commercial properties and to employers who all have a duty of care for an increasingly multi-ethnic workforce.

Most western countries seem to be following the UK’s more prescriptive policies regarding diversity in the workplace. This guide therefore provides a suitable benchmark for other countries to follow.

2. Organisations are Beginning to Understand

The provision of equality statements in employment Terms & Conditions is commonplace – reflecting an employer's statutory obligations. However, such considerate HR policies should not simply be driven by the need to meet legal obligations. Being proactive about the diverse needs of a culturally diverse workforce can produce real practical and financial payback. Reduced absenteeism, lower staff turnover, improved morale and loyalty, can all be the very tangible results of enlightened staff relations.

Gymnasias, canteens and staff lounges are already recognised as good practice by many large employers who see practical and commercial benefits in improving the ways they cater for the well-being of their staff and visitors; by providing great places to work, employers can entice the best employees.

Some businesses go further:

- Recreation facilities with games and musical instruments
- Sports facilities
- Sophisticated “relaxation chambers”

Businesses are increasingly providing facilities for the “physical” wellbeing of the staff, however fewer companies or public service organisations have given the same thought to the spiritual needs of their diverse workforce and visitors.

In today's pressured world, there is real need for people to have a quiet space for reflection, meditation or prayer in the workplace, to which they can retreat when necessary during the day. If such space is to be used for prayer it must, by law, be available to everyone without discrimination. It must, therefore, provide for the traditions of different faiths without causing offence to any. Hence the concept of a multi-faith room or quiet room as it is sometimes called.

Since the most recent UK legislation includes ‘lack of faith or belief’, in its definition of religion and belief for the purpose of establishing discrimination, such a room would potentially benefit any and every individual by providing a clean, quiet space, while avoiding the appearance of different treatment for different people with different beliefs.

- Most hospitals already provide a variety of multi-faith facilities for use by staff, patients, their relatives and visitors. Such facilities are, of course, especially relevant where there is personal suffering and distress. An opportunity for those affected by such circumstances to spend time in solitude in a dignified environment can be a vital part of the healing process – both physical and spiritual.

- Courts are places where stress can be alleviated by a few moments of quiet contemplation or prayer. Furthermore, some faiths, including Islam, require spiritual preparation before the taking of an oath on their holy book. Such preparation might also involve ritual ablution.
- Many government buildings, both national and local, such as prisons and libraries, are installing multi-faith facilities – for a while achieved by converting redundant smoking rooms, but these have long since disappeared, so other spaces need to be found.
- Airports generally provide prayer and ritual washing facilities for both travellers and staff.
- The armed forces are increasingly providing for the spiritual needs of members of all religions, both in barracks and in the field, and also to accommodate Muslim visitors from overseas who visit these facilities for training.
- Universities and colleges are leaders in encouraging multicultural tolerance and understanding. Faith rooms not only provide for worship by different faith groups, they also encourage interaction and mutual understanding.
- Large corporations and multinational employers are becoming more faith-aware.

3. Legislative Influences

Each country has its own laws relevant to the provision of facilities for prayer and/or quiet contemplation, both in private and public sector buildings. Whether these be termed prayer rooms, multi-faith rooms or quiet rooms, buildings ranging from hospitals and universities to offices and airports are increasingly featuring these facilities for employees and visitors. Countries in the EU are subject to a degree of uniformity in this area, however, member countries usually adopt their own regulations rather than rely on the relevant EU directive. As a result, detailed provisions can vary from one EU country to another. Countries outside the EU are increasingly introducing both mandatory requirements, and non-prescriptive guidance. Readers should therefore inform themselves of their own country's legislative requirements and standards of good practice.

4. Multi-Faith Provision

In many countries, employers have a legal obligation to make allowance and provision for all employees to carry out their particular religious practices where practicable.

Physical and financial constraints mean that it is simply not realistic for an organisation to consider the provision of separate facilities for every major faith.

A multi-faith room is therefore a pragmatic and readily-attainable solution. Because of the sheer number of religious faiths and denominations there can be no single formula for a perfect multi-faith room. 'One size fits all' is not a meaningful solution; in the great majority of situations the actual characteristics of a multi-faith room will inevitably be something of a compromise.

Whilst such a compromise may well fall short of being 'ideal' for every particular faith, it should be recognised by users as a genuine and really worthwhile attempt by that organisation to respect and cater for the religious needs of staff and visitors (whether they be casual or longer-term visitors such as students, patients or inmates).

5. Faith Room Design

5.1 Location

Different faiths have different approaches to ritual duties and performance.

For example, whilst Christianity is not demanding in terms of specific daily rituals, Islam requires Salat (prayers) be performed five times a day. This inevitably means that for proper observance, Salat will almost certainly occur at times during the ordinary working day.

It therefore makes commercial sense to try to minimise the amount of unproductive time involved in getting to, using and returning from the prayer facilities provided. This can be achieved by having a multi-faith room close to individual work locations, in the same way as toilets are distributed for convenience around buildings.

Ideally, multi-building campuses should have a faith-room in each building, multifloored offices should have a faith room on each floor and a cost-benefit analysis would clearly demonstrate whether or not such an arrangement was justified with an overriding benefit being a saving of unproductive time, traveling to and from such facilities.

5.2 Size

The size of a faith-room should be commensurate with the number of people likely to use it at any one time. The requirements of Muslims are the most predictable since their daily prayer routines take place at fixed times of the day determined by the times of sunrise and sunset. Furthermore, Salat follows a fairly fixed formula. There are also defined times for Jewish prayer at least twice a day, again determined by dawn and dusk. However, there is more flexibility allowed to Jews who can usually pray early in the morning before work and in the later afternoon or early evening after work.

Because the times for Muslim Salat are generally fixed, faith rooms needs to be large enough to accommodate all Muslim staff at one time, although it is unlikely that all Muslim staff will perform Salat every day. For example, females will not pray during their menstrual cycle, and prayer times on normal weekdays are more flexible than on Fridays, so it would be unlikely for all Muslim staff to be in the prayer room together. On Fridays however, it is obligatory for males to perform Salat in a group, similarly on days of Islamic significance (Eid and Ramadan).

Christians and adherents to most other faiths have no rigidly fixed times for daily prayers, so it is reasonable to assume that they would not choose to use the faith room during the times of Salat.

Each Muslim requires approximately 1.2m × 0.6m (4' x 2') of floor space on which to perform Salat. This enables them to place their forehead on the floor whilst kneeling, just touching shoulders with those on either side of them, so a faith room should ideally be large enough to accommodate this number.

Provision needs to be made for ritual ablution prior to Salat (wudu) and this is discussed separately below (refer to section 6).

Ideally, entirely separate facilities for prayer and washing should be provided for Muslim men and women. However, if men and women are to share the same prayer room, women would normally stand behind the men separated by a curtain. In order to cater for varying numbers of men and women the curtain should be mounted on a moveable rail, so the position of the partition can be varied. Alternatively, if no women are present, it can be removed altogether.

This same curtain partition would also be used by traditional Jews who pray publicly in a quorum of 10 men separated from any women present.

It is entirely inappropriate to provide communal male and female washing facilities. Whether a single faith room or separate male/female rooms are provided, there will need to be separate washing facilities, unless the washing facility is behind a locked door to ensure privacy for women.

5.3 Orientation

For most faiths there is no fixed direction in which prayers should be said although the cruciform footprint of older Christian churches follows a predictable orientation. Jews generally pray facing east towards Jerusalem. For Muslims however, it is mandatory for them to face the Ka'ba during prayer. This is an ancient religious site located in the city of Mecca.

Although the prayer room itself does not have to be orientated in any particular way, there should be some indication in it of which direction each wall faces – specifically the direction of east and of the city of Mecca. The exact direction of Mecca obviously depends on where in the world/country the faith room is located. A compass is available from most Muslim bookshops which indicates the exact direction of Mecca. An arrow, positioned on the ceiling is also recognised as a practical means of indicating this direction and can be purchased from WuduMate (refer signage 5.4.8.2).

Ideally, the entrance to the room should be situated to enable worshippers to enter and leave the room without passing in front of those at prayer.

5.3.1 Shoe Storage

Cleanliness plays a significant part in most religions, but



some faiths have a specific requirement for shoes to be removed before prayer. All visitors to the prayer room should therefore be encouraged to remove their shoes before entering. A sign to this effect should be displayed, suggesting to those who do not wish to remove their shoes that, out of respect to others, they should avoid walking across the main prayer area.

There should be an area where shoes can be removed prior to entering the faith room or associated washing areas, and a rack in which visitors can leave their footwear once removed.

5.3.2 Toilet Facilities

It is not mandatory to have toilet facilities installed within a prayer room environment, however if they are included, it should be remembered that Muslims should not use a toilet facing the same direction in which they pray, i.e. facing Mecca.

In addition, for a number of reasons, Muslim men will generally not use urinals, and continue preferring rather to urinate seated to standing, in the privacy of a toilet cubicle. It is suggested therefore, that when planning the location and design of toilets in the workplace, if a higher than normal percentage of staff are likely to be Muslim, more cubicles and less urinals are provided than might be normal, and urinals are excluded altogether from multi-faith areas.

It should also be noted that some ethnic groups (including Muslims) require to wash their personal parts with water after using the toilet, rather than using paper, in other words, they require a private bidet facility. (refer to section 6.2 Personal Washing).

5.4 Fixtures and Fittings in the Prayer Room

5.4.1 Religious Icons

The permanent presence of religious icons for one particular faith group can offend other religious groups and can create an atmosphere of 'possession' by one group. If the use of icons is specifically required by a particular religious group, there should be a cupboard for their storage when not in use. Ideally there should be a minimum of four such cupboards (to represent four of the major faiths). There are cupboards available which look like bookshelves from the front, but when opened up have different designs inside; once the outer doors of the cupboard are opened, internal designs can include:

- A shelf-like Christian altar, on which other Christian artefacts can be placed such as a cross or Bible, with cupboard space underneath.
- Muslim designs and graphics to look like a mini-mosque; appropriate lighting can also be installed in the cupboard.

5.4.2 Furniture

Furniture is not a mandatory requirement in a multi-faith facility, it is appropriate however to provide some informal seating for more casual visitors to use when reading or simply sitting in contemplation. A simple table should also be provided for items required by some faiths as part of their ritual. Christians, for example, would appreciate the presence of a cross or crucifix to denote an altar.

Jews might use a table for study, which is usual for them before, during or after prayer.

Ideally any furniture should be capable of being easily moved away from the central area of prayer. Such relocation should not be to the wall which people of particular faiths would face in prayer. The use of benches would be acceptable but there should also be some movable chairs for those who wish to sit at the table, or who find it difficult to kneel.

The use of leather furniture should be avoided since Hindus cannot accept leather in their places of worship.

5.4.3 Floor Covering

The covering of the prayer room floor should be in a neutral colour, so as to be acceptable to all faiths. It needs to be easy to keep clean.

5.4.4 Books and Religious Reading

Books and other religious publications such as calendars could be made available, but nothing should be left in permanent view, so as not to offend those of other faiths. It should instead be stored on a shelf or preferably in a cupboard.

Material for promotional or advertising purposes should not be allowed.

Leather covered books should be avoided due to the offence caused by cow hide in religions such as Hinduism (see 5.4.2 above).

5.4.5 Lighting

The prayer and washing areas should be well lit – ideally, in today's environmentally aware world, with energy saving devices.

5.4.6 Windows

Windows will assist with the lighting and natural ventilation of the prayer room, but users might prefer obscure glass to be used. Stained glass windows can add to the aesthetic appeal of the décor, but the subject matter should be neutral with no religious connotations.

5.4.7 Other

Prayer caps, mats, cushions and other items should be kept in cupboards so as not to cause offence.

The burning of incense may contravene fire regulations and run the risk of activating smoke sensors and should be strongly discouraged.

If the use of candles is to be allowed, this should be closely monitored and supervised. Appropriate legislation must be consulted, and a risk assessment undertaken. Ideally no more than one or two candles should be lit at any one time and should not be 'religion-specific'. (refer to 5.4.1).

5.4.8 Other Places of Worship

Contact details and addresses of other local places of worship such as churches, mosques and synagogues should be available. If the faith room is to be locked when not in use, a notice to this effect should be posted outside.

5.4.9 Signage

5.4.9.1 Statutory Signage

Statutory notices such as "No Smoking", "Fire Exit", "No Naked Flames" and any others that may apply to fire regulations and other legislation should be displayed.

5.4.9.2 Multi-faith and Wudu Room Signage

Different signs are recommended to suit the layout of the Multi Faith facilities, these could include the following:



6. Ritual Washing

Most religions value cleanliness with some practicing ritual washing before prayer or mealtimes.

Christian monks used to practice ritual washing in a communal wash area known as a Lavatorium. Although generally abandoned, this custom has been replaced by the washing of hands before meals.

Some observant Jews will wash their hands before prayer as a ritual undertaken as a devotion to God and an act of symbolic self-purification.

6.1 Wudu

Probably the most widely performed act of ritual cleansing is *wudu*, performed by Muslims before Salat (prayers). Wudu shows respect to God by bringing the adherent to prayer in a purified state.

The actual practice of wudu varies between different Muslim groups, generally, however, it requires the washing of the face, head, hands, arms and feet. Clean running water must be used except in some circumstances where no water is available. Contact with static or grey (dirty) water can invalidate the wudu ritual and should be prevented in any washing facility provided.

Wudu can take up to about three and a half minutes, and thus an appropriate number of washing stations need to be provided to cater for the probable number of people likely to want to perform wudu without causing too much of a queue.

Imagine...

Imagine you are a conscientious, hard-working employee of a supermarket chain. You are a Muslim and in your daily life you try hard to observe the quite demanding duties of ritual washing and prayer.

But it's not easy.

Your employer is sympathetic and tries to understand. But he does not really quite appreciate how difficult it is for you to find somewhere appropriate to carry out your religious duties in a quiet, dignified way which meets the requirements of your faith and personal aspirations without causing offence or distraction to colleagues.

You put up with having to wash your feet in the staff toilet in a wash hand basin over two feet high. You cringe when you put your bare foot back on the floor which is by now wet with unclean water and dangerously slippery. You brace yourself for the walk past non-Muslim staff to the storage area where you are allowed to say your prayers with the other four Muslims who work in the supermarket.

Your employer is really good to be so sympathetic. But you believe another employer not far away has gone even further to accommodate the religious needs of his multi-ethnic staff by implementing a purpose built facility for wudu and prayer.

Maybe you should make some enquiries...



Could this be your washroom?

6.1.1. The Concept of a Clean 'Taher' Zone

In Muslim ablution terms, the organisation of a 'clean zone' aims at keeping the praying space free of organic traces, bad smells, and other things that render the praying space unusable for Salat or would upset those performing their prayers.

It is therefore important in the design of the prayer area to define a line after which people should not be wearing their shoes, since these shoes might be carrying traces of road dirt.

The 'line' designating this clean zone can be a change of floor material, a small step or even a taped line on the floor; shoes should be left outside the clean zone; thus any shoe racks should also be located outside this zone. Toilets should obviously be outside this zone, ablution spaces though can be, and probably should be inside this zone.

Conceptually, access to the ablution space can be from either outside or from inside the clean zone. Access from inside the clean zone can be either directly from the praying area or through a corridor or other types of links, but care must be taken to ensure no water is taken from the ablution area to the prayer hall.

6.1.2 Wudu in Washrooms

Many corporate bodies remain unaware of the importance of the washing ritual to Muslims and do not provide appropriate washing facilities. This leaves observant Muslims having, for example, to wash their feet in an ordinary hand basin in a toilet area. This not only shows a casual disregard for their needs but also creates very real and obvious health and safety hazards.

A solution is to provide tailor-made washing facilities which could be more closely associated with the prayer room – e.g. completely separate from toilet areas, which is a highly recommended approach if space can be made available.

6.1.3 The Water

The water used for wudu must be clean and flowing. Although not mandatory, in colder climates it should be pre-mixed to an ambient temperature before being dispensed.

6.1.4 WuduMate®

The WuduMate is a unique range of washing appliances specifically designed for the Muslim ritual of wudu. Designed and manufactured by the Specialist Washing Company of the United Kingdom, (trading as WuduMate), a range of WuduMate models are available for use in the workplace, meeting all of the aforementioned requirements.

More information is available at www.wudumate.com

6.1.5 Disabled Facilities

If a sick or disabled person cannot do wudu with water because he is unable to do so, there is a dispensation which he/she can follow called 'Tayammum'. 'Tayammum' literally involves the disabled/sick person 'striking their hands on pure dust' then wiping his/her face with the inside of their fingers and palms. In the likely circumstance no 'pure dust' is available, other natural substances such as floor or wall tiles can be used.

Despite the above, it is suggested that 'best efforts' are made to accommodate disabled people in the wudu area, but it is extremely difficult to configure a disabled facility for wudu that caters for every type of disability. Unlike disabled toilets where in many countries there is a published standard, (in the UK there is the DOC M standard for disabled toilet facilities in the workplace) there is rarely a standard for the provision of disabled wudu facilities.

For any project outside the UK which requires wudu facilities, it is suggested that local regulations are checked to ascertain whether there any documented standards for providing wudu facilities for disabled people in commercial buildings; if not, the following approach would be sensible. (refer below)

It is suggested, that whatever arrangements are being considered for wudu, they should at least demonstrate 'best efforts' to cater for disabled users. If it can be demonstrated that 'best efforts' have been made to cater for the needs of the disabled in a wudu facility, these are likely to be accepted by any reasonable disability auditor. There are a number of WuduMate configurations which can be used to assist in this, with each WuduMate model configurable to some extent for disabled use, some facilitating wheelchair access better than others:



- WuduMate Modular – The WuduMate Modular can be configured without its stool for standing wudu, and as long as the WuduMate Modular is fitted flush with the floor, wheelchairs will be able to access this.
- WuduMate Classic – Requires wheelchair users to relocate to the WuduMate, just as they would to a toilet in a DOC M facility.
- WuduMate Compact – The WuduMate Compact stool can be fitted with a handle to assist in standing and or sitting, or the stool can be moved aside completely to enable wheelchair access.
- WuduMate Mobile - The WuduMate Mobile can be wheeled directly to a disabled person, for them to perform their wudu, rather than the disabled person needing to go to the wudu facility.

In all of the above, the following are suggested:-

- Taps (faucets) should either be sensor driven, or if possible fitted with ‘wrist blades’ for easier use by those with disabilities such as poor eyesight (clearly seeing the on/off mechanism of the tap), or poor dexterity (e.g. arthritis) where a larger on/off handle would be beneficial.
- Disabled bars to assist standing/sitting, manoeuvring on/off a wheelchair onto the WuduMate Classic seat etc

6.1.6 Use of Thermostatic Mixing Valves (TMV’s)

Destroying the bacteria that causes Legionnaires’ Disease requires water to be heated to at least 140°F (60°C) at which point third-degree burns can be caused to children in just one second and to adults in no more than five seconds.

Many deaths are caused by scalding – in the UK alone it causes an average of twelve deaths a year. In the US approximately 25,000 hospitalisations a year are directly attributable to dangerously-hot tap water, and 34 deaths occur in homes alone.

In order to accommodate Legionnaires prevention, and at the same time avoid the risks of excessively hot water being delivered at the tap, an automatic Thermostatic Mixing Valve (TMV) should be used to regulate the temperature of the water. Where a wudu facility is used irregularly, it is recommended that a ‘flush through’ process is undertaken periodically to ensure Legionnaires’ bacteria cannot reside within the pipework to the wudu appliance tap.

6.1.7 Taps and Water Saving

Whichever design of tap is chosen for the ablution area, the spout should be in a comfortable position for those performing wudu, and the flow of water directed and managed so as to minimise splashing. ‘Grey water’ splashing on those performing wudu, or their attire, can invalidate the wudu ritual.

6.1.7.1 Sensor Taps

Sensor activated taps are widely used in public buildings, despite the fact they are expensive and require periodic maintenance. Sensor taps need to be equipped with TMVs (Thermostatic Mixing Valves refer 6.1.6) to dispense ready-mixed water, and can then be operated without the user having to touch the tap. This has obvious hygiene benefits, but questionable benefits if being used for wudu: -

- Taps can malfunction and leave water running
- It is common for children to stick gum on the sensor to keep water running
- If someone performing wudu finishes in the middle of a water run, the water would run until the end of the on-cycle with no one in front of it thus wasting water
- The time setting of a sensor tap can be frustrating for those performing wudu

6.1.7.2 Manually Operated Taps

Manually operated taps are generally not recommended in a commercial environment, because of the risk of scalding after heating water to combat legionella bacteria. (refer 6.1.6). If manual taps are to be used, a TMV should be placed on the hot input.

6.1.7.3 Non-Concussive ('time delay') Taps

Non-concussive taps are sometimes considered as a low cost means to have a water saving tap, but like sensor taps, they can be prone to malfunction when suddenly they can become very extravagant on water usage by continuing to run. One only has to visit a few service stations around the UK motorway network, where inevitably a significant percentage of the oft-used non-concussive taps in the washrooms will either not be working at all, or will be running continuously, due to the fact that they have moving parts which can malfunction, especially if the water quality is poor.

As with sensor taps, the time setting (typically about 7 seconds) of a non-concussive tap, can be annoying for those performing wudu.

6.1.7.4 Single Water-source Taps

Single water-source manual taps, where there is no manual control of temperature (the unit is fitted with a TMV), just a simple manual on-off/fast-slow controller, are generally robust and relatively inexpensive.

6.1.7.5 In-line Filters

It is suggested that whatever tap is used (especially non-concussive taps) a policy of installing in-line water filters is adopted; foreign particles in the water supply, present for whatever reason, (flux from soldering pipes, limescale, etc) can cause moving parts within a tap to malfunction, resulting in either the tap dripping, or even a constant flow of water.

6.1.7.6 Water Savers

6.1.7.6.1 Aerators

Aerators can be used to manage the type of flow of the water from taps (Laminar or Turbulent) to help reduce splashing but also to limit the flow, which i) also helps reduce splashing ii) helps to save water. (Refer www.neoperl.net).

6.1.8 Floor

The floor of any washing room facility likely to be affected by water spillage should be tiled or covered with linoleum to prevent damage, ideally with an anti-slip surface. This may be a legal requirement in some countries, but even if not, anti-slip surfaces will reduce the potential risk of accident claims.

6.1.9 Matting

It is important to have some means of drying the feet after washing so as not to take excess water and associated bacteria into the prayer area. (refer foot Driers 6.1.12) When performing Salat it is necessary to place the head against the floor and it is believed that many get infected with bacteria at this point from damp and bacteria infected carpets, especially the elderly, for whom it can cause asthma and other respiratory conditions. One means of helping to dry the feet after wudu is to provide specially designed antibacterial, anti-slip matting which helps dry the feet before entering the prayer hall. (refer www.wudumate.com).



Different coloured matting can also be used to identify wet-feet/dry-feet walkways, to help prevent wet water being walked into the prayer area. e.g. red matting to identify walkways for wet feet from the ablution area to a foot drying area and green matting signifying walkways for dry feet walking from the drying area into the prayer hall.

6.1.10 Walls

Walls should ideally be tiled where water is likely to splash – typically behind and around washing appliances. This assists in cleaning, reduces mildew and mould growth, and prevents water damage.

6.1.11 Drying Facilities

Drying facilities are not mandatory, but it is preferable to provide them. These should be hygienic to use – such as paper towels or hot air dryers, and ideally suitable for hands, arms and also face.

If possible, feet should also be dried (Refer foot driers in 6.1.12 below) to stop the ingress of water into the prayer hall. (Refer matting and dampness in prayer halls in 6.1.9)

6.1.12 Foot Dryers

Automatic foot dryers are becoming increasingly more popular, such as those supplied by WuduMate (www.wudumate.com) and can be used in conjunction with coloured floor matting, to direct people to the prayer hall after use without walking on wet floors. (refer Matting 6.1.9)

6.1.13 Waste Disposal

If paper towels are to be used receptacles should be provided for their disposal.

6.1.14 Soap

Soap should be available for anyone who wishes to use it. As in other public environments soap should ideally be dispensed from an automatic dispenser to improve hygiene and remove slip-hazards caused by loose bars of soap. Many soaps contain animal fat so specific compliant halal soaps should be sourced (refer www.wudumate.com)

6.2 Personal Washing

Some faiths require the washing of intimate parts after using the toilet, which is difficult to accomplish when away from home where bidet facilities are rarely provided.

6.2.1 Bidets

A conventional personal washing appliance in the home would often be a bidet, the personal nature of which dictates that it needs to be located in a private place; this is rarely practical or cost effective in a commercial environment. If a traditional bidet is installed in the workplace, there needs to be a one to one relationship between bidet to toilet, with both being located behind a locked door to ensure privacy. This is rarely cost effective in a commercial or public sector environment.

6.2.2 Personal Washing in the Workplace

In order to undertake personal washing when away from home, some faiths will fill whatever container they can find (often a cup or water bottle) with water and take this to the privacy of a toilet cubicle to undertake this personal ablution act in private; using a single-use, plastic water bottle is environmentally unfriendly due to the wastage of plastic containers, or if the containers are returned after use, (such as cup to a canteen) there is potentially a hygiene issue.

In addition, when water containers are used in toilet areas, they can fall over causing spillages and result in slip hazards. Several other options for personal

washing in the commercial environment can be considered such as the following:

6.2.2.1 Douches

In many Muslim countries, it is customary to install hand showers (douches) behind public toilets, enabling washing of private parts with water (as with a bidet) after toilet use. The disadvantage of douches in a public environment is that they can be (and often are) stolen for home use, and careless use may cause spilt water that could pose a slip hazard .

In addition, it should be noted that most douche products will drip water when left under pressure, i.e. not turned off at the mains supply. To alleviate this, it is recommended that installations include an isolator valve for each user to use before/after use, but on the assumption users will not turn this off after use, it is recommended that each douche spray is fitted with a time-delay valve to automatically turn the water off after use. It is also recommended that an adequate floor drain be located under the hanging position of the douche spray.

6.2.2.2 Bidet Toilets

There are a number of electronic bidet toilets available in the market, primarily designed for medical applications in the health sector, and due to their electronic, complex nature, tend to be more expensive and therefore used more in the home. (refer www.toto.com)

6.2.2.3 Integrated Bidet

Increasingly popular are conventional style western toilets with a hand operated bidet spout installed under the rim at the back of the toilet, such as the following available from wudumate. (www.WuduMate.com). Care should be taken to consult local building regulations, since it is likely some sort of backflow-prevention system will be required.



6.2.2.4 Personal Bidets

For environments where the installation and maintenance of douches and bidet toilets is impractical, facilities managers may consider the provision of personal bidets for staff and visitors.

The WuduMate Personal is a low cost, reusable, plastic container specifically designed for use as a personal bidet, and an excellent solution where no other suitable appliance is available. The WuduMate Personal can be conveniently folded after use and carried compactly in its own self-sealable pouch for future use, negating the need for random use of single-use plastic bottles and other unsuitable containers. (Refer wudumate.com)



6.2.2.5 Personal Bidet Dispensers

As employers become more familiar with the bidet requirements of their staff, some are accepting that making an investment into readily available bidet facilities, will in the long term reduce water damage to avoid slip hazards and reduce cleaning costs. Providing Personal Bidet dispensers in suitable locations, either on a pay basis or even 'Free of Charge' is an easy to justify option.



7. Prayer and Wudu Facilities at External Events

It can be difficult to equip Muslim events such as seminars, weddings and exhibitions with appropriate prayer and washing facilities, since this is likely to involve a temporary high level in demand. The prayer area is easiest to accommodate and most, if not all the recommendations in this Guide relating to the prayer area can be followed. Another useful guide to planning and arranging facilities is *Guidance on Muslim Prayer Provision for Event and Facility Managers*, which can be found by following the link:

<https://sites.google.com/euroqualityfoundation.org/cravenarmsic-org/islam/guidance-for-prayer-provision>

Allocating a space for prayer can be relatively easy in a commercial environment, either to be left as a dedicated space for Salat for the duration of the event, or used at other times for something else, and space cleared/chairs moved etc specifically for Salat when required.

Making suitable provision for ablution before prayer (Wudu) can be more difficult, because the only, likely, existing space with running water suitable for wudu, would be the washrooms; this will require visitors to wash their feet in washbasins, which is not recommended, and not popular with Health & Safety officials.

There are some temporary wudu facilities provided by WuduMate which can be considered (e mail info@wudumate.com) and this specialist company can also provide personal bidets for visiting Muslims to use after visiting the toilet to perform 'Istinja', another ablution requirement before prayer (Refer 6.2.2.4).

7.1 Portable Wudu Facilities

Where it is not possible to get easy access to mains water and drainage services to provide a Wudu facility close to a suitable prayer area, it is possible to take a temporary wudu facility to the prayer area. The WuduMate Mobile (Refer www.wudumate.com) is manufactured with integral clean and grey water reservoirs, and can be wheeled for use to a convenient location for Wudu.



Typical applications could include:-

- Offices – when an infrequently used designated prayer area is not close to a usable wudu facility, the WuduMate Mobile can be filled in a bathroom, wheeled close to the prayer area, used to perform wudu and taken back to the bathroom for emptying.
- Hospitals/nursing homes - when patients are unable to get easily to a central wudu facility, the WuduMate Mobile could be wheeled to the patient.
- Hotels - when too few muslim visitors justify wudu facilities in each room, the WuduMate Mobile could be wheeled to a muslim occupied room when required.
- Prisons & Police Stations – when it is inconvenient/unsafe to take a prisoner to a central wudu facility, the WuduMate Mobile can be taken to the prisoner
- Exhibitions/events – when temporary wudu facilities are required



8. Prayer Room Usage

8.1 Legal

As with any public environment, a prayer room and associated washing facilities should comply with local customs and must comply with prevailing local legislation.

Users should always respect the feelings of others in terms of their dress and general behaviour.

Smoking should be prevented in countries where it is now illegal to smoke in public places.

The consumption of alcohol or illegal substances should be strictly prohibited.

8.2 Maintenance and Cleaning

All faiths respect cleanliness, so the faith room and washing areas should be kept clean and, ideally, odour-free at all times.

Odours can be offensive to members of some religions when praying, so care should be taken when choosing cleaning materials to be either odour free, or non-offensive and religion neutral. (e.g. although Oud would generally be popular with Muslims but might be offensive to other religions).

There are a number of extremely efficient de-odourisers, which kill odour-making bacteria at source and are ideal for use in washrooms, with the additional benefit that they are proven to kill Covid 19. (Refer Biozone on www.wudumate.com)

Any soaps and fragrances used in the ablution area should ideally be free of animal products and alcohol. Soaps should be provided in a dispenser for hygiene purposes. The room should be well ventilated, and food of any sort should be discouraged.

Any promotional or advertising material should be removed from the multi-faith room.

8.3 Opening Times

Ideally a multi-faith room should be open for use by anyone at any time, but only for its primary purpose; other use should be discouraged or even prohibited, such as for meetings or study not associated with the pursuit of any religious belief.

For security and practical reasons though, it may not be possible for a multi-faith facilities to be open 24/7, and depending on its location, the facility might even need to be locked when not in use; if locking is required, access should easily be made by arrangement.

9. Planning a Multi-Faith Room

We hope that the planning of a multi-faith room can be facilitated by this publication, Diversity Matters, WuduMate's Guide to Best Practice Multi-Faith Room Design.

This Guide can be complemented by useful product information on www.wudumate.com, with further assistance available from WuduMate itself on info@wudumate.com.

WuduMate have supplied advice and accompanying ablution products to many commercial projects, and if one lesson has been learnt over all others, it is to involve Muslim staff in the design and construction of the multi-faith facility and be sure to include both men and women in this process. This can be done diplomatically by forming a small committee, to include other stakeholders such as HR and electricians, plumbers and other contractors.

10. Project Gallery











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www.wudumate.com
info@wudumate.com
+44 1784 748080 GMT
+1 513 815 3070 PACIFIC TIME ZONE

   WuduMateUK

WuduMate, PO Box 541,
Egham, Surrey, TW20 0WN,
United Kingdom