

## **Summary of Alberta Justice and Solicitor General Perimeter Security Screening Procedures for Kirpans at Alberta courthouses**

Practicing members of the Sikh faith who identify themselves as a Khalsa Sikh, will be allowed to wear kirpans in public areas of courthouses subject to the following standards:

1. Any person who enters a courthouse in Alberta wearing a kirpan must identify themselves as a Khalsa Sikh and inform the sheriffs that they are carrying a kirpan. Only Khalsa Sikh individuals shall be permitted entry into a courthouse with a kirpan providing they meet the requirements of this policy.
2. All five articles of the Sikh faith must be worn and available for proof of the person's Khalsa Sikh status. These articles include unshorn hair, a wooden comb, an iron bracelet, cotton breeches and a kirpan.
3. Any person who identifies themselves as a Khalsa Sikh may be required to produce government-issued photo identification for the purpose of conducting a risk assessment. If the person refuses to provide identification they will be given the opportunity to leave the courthouse and return without the kirpan. Refusal to provide identification and/or voluntarily secure the kirpan will result in that individual being denied entry to the courthouse.
4. The maximum total length of the kirpan including the sheath may not exceed 7.5 inches (19 centimetres) with a blade length of not more than four inches (10 centimetres).
5. The kirpan must be worn in keeping with the Sikh tradition. This includes being secured in a sheath and secured into a fabric belt and worn across the torso. It shall be worn this way throughout attendance at the courthouse so that the kirpan is not readily removable.
6. The kirpan must be worn under clothing and not easily accessible and remain so throughout attendance at the courthouse.

The sheriffs will conduct a risk assessment from a general risk-based perspective and the assessment may include but will not be limited to the following:

1. The reason for the person being at the courthouse (visitor, witness, victim, accused, jury duty, student, etc.).

2. The type of court proceeding the person is attending (criminal trial, small claims, family court, etc.).
3. The adversarial nature of the court proceeding that the person intends to attend.
4. Any other identified risk factors that may contribute to a potential for violence. Types of factors include, but are not limited to, occurrences of prior threats of violence, prior circumstances of violence and potential volatility of the participants.
5. If there is a contentious case being heard in the courthouse with a serious potential for violence, the person wearing a kirpan will not be allowed entry into the courthouse in order to ensure that the kirpan cannot not be taken from them and used as a weapon by someone else.

The policy also includes procedures for the sheriffs to follow in any case where an individual is not in compliance with the above standards or where the sheriffs identify risk factors that would determine a kirpan should not be admitted.