

December 2006 – Judge orders Christmas tree removed

An Ontario judge ordered that a Christmas tree be removed from the lobby of a Toronto courthouse. The judge was concerned that the tree might offend non-Christians and make them feel like outsiders in the court house.

Reasonable? (Y/N) ___ Why? _____

October 2006 – YMCA frosts glass windows at request of synagogue

A YMCA in downtown Montreal frosted the glass windows of its exercise area after receiving complaints from a synagogue for Hasidic Jews, located across the street from the YMCA. The rabbi of the synagogue complained that male worshippers were being distracted by women exercising at the gym. (The YMCA later replaced the frosted glass with clear glass and window blinds after receiving complaints about the frosted glass from some of the women who exercised at the facility. The women felt it was wrong for them to be hidden from view. Now the blinds are raised or lowered at the request of those exercising in the gym.)

Reasonable? (Y/N) ___ Why? _____

May 2006 – Muslim schoolgirls allowed swim test in private

Three Muslim schoolgirls in Quebec asked to be excused from swimming class because their religion forbade them from sharing a pool with males. The school board said the girls could not be excused from a key part of the physical education curriculum, but did allow the girls to be tested privately by a female instructor.

Reasonable? (Y/N) ___ Why? _____

March 2006 – Quebec college ordered to find prayer space for Muslim students

A complaint was made to the Quebec Human Rights Commission (www.cdpcj.qc.ca) by about 100 Muslim students because they were unhappy about having to pray in a stairwell. The Commission ruled that the college had a responsibility to offer reasonable prayer accommodation to the Muslim students, such as an empty classroom. But the Commission also stated that the college was not under any obligation to build a separate prayer facility for the students.

Reasonable? (Y/N) ___ Why? _____

Reflection

Consider what you learned from these cases. With a partner, write your own definition of reasonable accommodation. Be prepared to share your definition with the class.