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Nov 14, 2010

Fredericksburg Fas Mart Changes Policy after Woman Denied Service Because of Her Religious Headscarf

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RICHMOND, Va. -- Fas Mart, the c-store chain based here, has terminated its store policy of asking customers to remove "hoodies" and other headgear which had been in place to deter shoplifting and other criminal activities, the company stated on its Web site.

The decision came after a Muslim woman complained of being denied service at one of Fas Marts' stores, because of her refusal to remove her headscarf, *The Washington Post* reported.

On Nov. 9, Tralesha Faison tried to make a purchase at a Fredericksburg Fas Mart, but was unable to complete the transaction because she did not remove her headscarf when asked by a Fas Mart employee to do so.

"When I walked into the store, the cashier, she asked me to remove my kimar, my scarf," Faison told *The Washington Post*. "I told her I wear this for the sake of God," she said. "She told me I had to take it off for her safety and security purposes." Faison also added that she "was humiliated, discriminated against, and I was embarrassed."

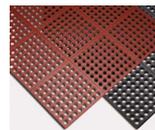
On Nov. 11 Fas Mart issued a statement of apology on the its Web site in response to the incident, saying that they had suspended the employee pending further investigation and stated that "the company intends to ask CAIR (Council on American-Islamic Relations) to advise our training personnel about sensitivity issues in dealing with the Islamic community."

The day after the incident, Faison went back to the Fredericksburg Fas Mart where the manager of the store apologized to Faison in person.

Fas Mart called this incident "regrettable" and included in the formal apology that "Fas Mart has a longstanding policy of non-discrimination which forbids any discriminatory or unwelcome conduct that is based on an individual's race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, ancestry, marital status, veteran status, citizenship status, sexual orientation, genetic information, or any other protected status of an individual or that individual's associates or relatives. The company has over 1,700 employees that span the wide spectrum of all races, colors and creeds."

The Post noted that Faison is considering suing the company but "needs a little more time to process the whole situation," said Faison.

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Fas Mart operates more than 215 c-stores in states that include Virginia, Delaware, Maryland, Connecticut and Tennessee.

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