



A POLICE OFFICER'S GUIDE TO JUDAISM



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WHAT IS JUDAISM?

Judaism is the religion of the Jewish people and, at almost 4000 years old, is one of the oldest religious traditions still practised today. Its values and history are a major part of the foundations of Christianity and Islam.

There are approximately 12 million Jewish people in the world, six million of whom live in Israel. There are around 320,000 Jews in the UK who belong to a number of different denominations. These are:

Strictly Orthodox (Haredi)

Strictly Orthodox Jews regard the Torah (the primary source of Jewish law & ethics) as Divinely given to Moses on Mount Sinai nearly 4000 years ago. Their strict customs and distinctive clothing makes them easily identifiable.

Modern Orthodox

Although they observe the sabbath and all religious traditions, their mode of dress is modern fashion. They are integrated into secular culture and society and would not be easily identifiable as a distinctive group although many males wear a small *kippah* or *yarmulke* (skull cap) as headwear.

Reform and Liberal

Members of these movements do not observe the faith in the same way as Orthodox Jews would. For example, Orthodox Jews will usually wear a head covering which they believe shows respect for God. Reform and Liberal Jews do not believe this is necessary.

Reform and Liberal Jews may also have a different interpretation to the governing sabbath observance or the dietary laws. In addition, women can become Rabbis and men and women sit together in the synagogue.

There are also many people who are not affiliated to any denomination or keep any of the traditional laws, but who still identify as Jews.



Strictly Orthodox Jews
in their traditional clothing

THE SABBATH

Practical Policing Issues

- Non-emergency crimes will not usually be reported until after the sabbath or the festival has ended
- Orthodox Jews will be unwilling to write statements or sign their names
- Orthodox Jews will not use the telephone on the sabbath



SABBATH

The sabbath, also referred to as *Shabbat* (as it is called in Hebrew) or *Shabbos* (as it is called in Yiddish), is one of the most important parts of the Jewish faith. Jews are required to refrain from various acts of 'work' on the sabbath, in commemoration of God's cessation of work on the seventh day of creation. Jews traditionally attend synagogue services with the family on the sabbath and celebrate the day in the company of family and friends with a celebratory meal.

What is Considered as 'Work'?

Taken in a modern context, Orthodox Jews generally refrain from such activities as:

- All types of business transaction (shops and businesses are closed)
- Driving and travelling
- Using electronic equipment (including phones, computers, radio/TV etc)
- Handling money
- Writing
- Carrying anything outside of the home (see 'Eruv' below)

For observant Jews the sabbath laws are binding in all circumstances except in the case of danger to life.

The Timing of the Sabbath

The sabbath starts on Friday about one hour before nightfall, or 15 minutes before dusk. Therefore, Orthodox Jews need to leave work or school in sufficient time to arrive home before the onset of the sabbath.

At its earliest in mid-winter, the sabbath commences at approximately 3:30pm, but during the summer months will be much later. The sabbath lasts for approximately 25 hours until nightfall on Saturday evening.

Life-Threatening Emergencies

Where there is danger to life either through a medical or other emergency, sabbath laws must be disregarded in order to save life. The emergency services should be called in this instance as on any weekday.

Eruv

An Eruv is an enclosure around a home or community. It enables the carrying of objects out of doors for Jews on the Jewish sabbath and certain Holydays that would otherwise be forbidden by Torah law (Halakha). Without an Eruv, observant Jews would be unable to carry keys or tissues in their pockets or push wheelchairs or baby carriages on the Jewish sabbath and Holydays thus making it difficult for many to leave home.

Historically, the Eruv was made of walls or doorways, but in modern times, where it is impractical to put up walls in public areas, the Eruv can be constructed from a 'continuous wall', real or symbolic, out of wire and posts and natural boundaries.

JEWISH FESTIVALS

Practical Policing Issues

- Festival laws are almost indistinguishable from sabbath laws, and exactly the same policing issues will apply
- Many people who do not usually attend services during the rest of the year will do so on the festivals. The synagogues will therefore be full and the nearby streets will often be very busy
- Each festival may have specific policing requirements. These are described in this section



For a guide to festival dates over the next five years, please see the inside back cover of this booklet

FESTIVALS

The Jewish calendar has a number of festivals and special days, either commemorating major events in Jewish history or celebrating certain times of the year.

Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year)

Rosh Hashanah takes place over two days either in September or October, and is considered one of the most important periods in the Jewish calendar. It is an opportunity for reflection on our actions of the previous year.

Practical Policing Issues on Rosh Hashanah

- Many synagogues will have additional overflow services either on the premises or nearby
- Members of Reform and Liberal communities will often drive to synagogue services, and there may be significant congestion and parking issues. Even in Orthodox communities there may be an increase in traffic
- On the afternoon of the first day (or the second day if the first falls on the sabbath), many Jewish people will walk to a river to symbolically 'cast away' their sins. This ceremony is called *tashlich*

The *Shofar* (ram's horn) is sounded on Rosh Hashanah



Yom Kippur (Day Of Atonement)

This festival is the most solemn day in the Jewish calendar and involves praying for forgiveness for sins committed in the past year and demonstrating repentance. Every Jewish person, except children and those who are ill, is required to abstain from food and drink for 25 hours from sundown on the previous evening until nightfall the next day.

Practical Policing Issues on Yom Kippur

- Synagogues are open all day and are extremely busy, especially for the evening services
- Many people will walk home during the day for a short break from prayers. There is likely to be a continuous flow of people on the streets throughout the day
- Since most Jewish families will be in synagogue for the opening and concluding services of Yom Kippur, their homes may be more vulnerable to burglars

Succot (Tabernacles)

This festival begins five days after the end of Yom Kippur and commemorates the temporary booths which the Israelites constructed in the wilderness after their exodus from Egypt. During this eight-day festival, Jewish people are required to live and eat in a similar booth, known as a *succah*.

The intermediate days of this festival are regular working days.

Practical Policing Issues on Succot

- Many Jewish people will be carrying long boxes containing palm tree leaves to and from synagogue. This is a tradition of the holiday
- Synagogues will have a succah on their premises

Simchat Torah (Rejoicing of the Law)

Immediately following Succot is Simchat Torah, which is one of the most joyous festivals in the Jewish calendar. Many synagogues hold parties after the service.

Practical Policing Issues on Simchat Torah

- Many families and children will attend synagogue services on this day, and there will often be outdoor parties
- Synagogue services will usually last a lot longer during the day, and many communities will also hold a communal luncheon. Therefore synagogues may not close until mid-afternoon

Pesach (Passover)

This eight day festival, which often coincides with the Easter weekend, recalls the freedom of the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt. To remember the haste with which they escaped, no leavened food such as bread, cereals or beer, may be consumed or owned on this festival.

A family enjoying a festive
Seder meal on Pesach



Shavuot (Pentecost)

Shavuot takes place seven weeks after Pesach (usually around late May/early June) and celebrates the Jewish people receiving the Torah. The festival lasts for two days and it is traditional to eat dairy products.

Practical Policing Issues on Shavuot

- It is traditional to study through the night on the first evening of this festival and there may be many people on the streets and in synagogues

In addition to these festivals, there are two other minor festivals in which normal work and activities are permitted.

Chanukah (Festival of Lights)

This joyous festival is celebrated by lighting a candelabra (called a *menorah*) every night for eight nights. Other traditions include eating food cooked in oil such as doughnuts and potato pancakes, giving presents and holding parties.

Practical Policing Issues on Chanukah

- It is traditional for families to display the (often expensive) candelabra in their front windows. Therefore burglaries and fires can occur, and the community leaders should be given the appropriate advice
- Some Jewish communities will hold Chanukah ceremonies in public places



The menorah is usually displayed prominently in the front window of a Jewish home

Purim (Festival of Lots)

This one-day festival recalls the story of Esther, a Jewish queen in Persia who foiled a plot by one of the king's advisors to kill all the Jews. As well as the story being read in synagogue from a special scroll called a *megillah*, it is a day for parties and communal celebrations.

Practical Policing Issues on Purim

- This is a day of joy and fun, and fancy dress costumes are traditionally worn, even in public places
- It is traditional for young children to walk through the local neighbourhood collecting for charity and delivering food parcels to friends
- This is one of the few occasions in the year in which the consumption of alcohol is encouraged. This can lead to isolated instances of antisocial behaviour

FOOD

Practical Policing Issues

- Kosher food should always be offered when inviting a Jewish guest to a meeting
- Pre-packaged meals can be made available if a detainee or a prisoner requires them
- Do not bring any food into a Jewish home without permission
- On all matters of kashrut, it is important to consult a Rabbi or reliable authority



FOOD

Jewish dietary laws govern the way kosher food is manufactured and served. Jews who observe the dietary laws of Kashrut will only eat food, manufactured or cooked, which bears a reliable seal of approval by a rabbinical authority. This includes meat products, baked foods and dairy foods. All cooking utensils, crockery and cutlery must only be used for kosher foods. Dairy food and meat foods must be kept separate and cooked and served in different saucepans and dishes for each. Observant Jews will eat only in restaurants which are supervised by a recognised Kashrut authority.

What Meat is Permitted?

Animals: According to Jewish law, a kosher animal is required to 'chew the cud' and have cloven hooves. Therefore products from cows or sheep are permitted, but those from pigs are prohibited.

Birds: Most poultry, including chicken, turkey, duck and goose are permitted but birds of prey are not.

Fish: A kosher fish must have fins and scales. Therefore those such as cod, haddock and plaice are kosher, but shellfish, octopus and oysters are not.

Jews are permitted to eat only food which is kosher. Meat and poultry must be prepared by *shechita*, the Jewish religious and humane method of slaughtering animals and poultry for food. This method may only be carried out by a duly qualified and licensed individual, known as a *shochet*.

Separating Meat and Milk

Jewish people may not consume milk and meat together. It is therefore traditional to wait three hours after eating meat or poultry before consuming any dairy products, although some people may wait up to six hours. Separate utensils and cooking equipment are also required.

Kosher Shopping and Restaurants

To accommodate Jewish customers, manufacturers often produce ranges of products that are specially supervised. This is because, even if the product is marked as vegetarian, the food may still have been made on the same factory line as something that is not kosher, and Orthodox Jews would refrain from eating it.

Special care and attention is also required when eating in restaurants. Many Orthodox Jews will only eat in a restaurant that is supervised by a Jewish authority. However, others may be happy to eat in an unlicensed restaurant. It is therefore appropriate to ask your dining partner of their level of observance.

Kosher McDonald's in Israel -
absolutely no cheeseburgers for sale



JEWISH CLOTHING AND HOMES

Practical Policing Issues

- Whilst you should always be conscious that you are in a Jewish home, there is no particular way that you need to behave or dress, and you are not required to follow Jewish practices
- Orthodox Jewish men and women may not shake hands with officers of the opposite sex, and any such gesture will be politely refused. However, no offence will be taken



JEWISH CLOTHING AND HOMES

Observant Jewish men cover their heads at all times, usually with a small skullcap known as a *yarmulke* or *kippah*. Some may also wear a tasseled garment, called *tzitzit*, as an undergarment and this may be visible below their waist.

Married Orthodox Jewish women cover their hair or wear a wig at all times as a sign of modesty. They will only wear modest clothing and many will not wear trousers, short skirts or short sleeves.

All traditional Jewish homes can be identified by looking for a *mezuzah*. This is a small box containing two biblical texts, which is affixed to the right-hand doorpost of most rooms in a Jewish home, including the front door.



A mezuzah is an easy way to identify a Jewish home

SYNAGOGUE AND PRAYER

Practical Policing Issues

- It is not necessary for male police officers to wear a hat when entering a synagogue, but the gesture of covering the head will nevertheless be appreciated as a sign of respect
- Discretion should be used if taking pictures, videos or using tape recorders in a synagogue during the sabbath and festival services



SYNAGOGUE AND PRAYER

All men and boys over the age of 13 are required to pray three times a day. While this can be performed individually, most men prefer to attend synagogue and pray with at least ten men present. Such a prayer group, called a *minyan*, is particularly important when a person is in a period of mourning.

- Morning prayers take place between 6.00am and 9.00am, and last about 45 minutes. Phylacteries (small leather boxes containing biblical texts known as *tefillin*) and a prayer shawl are worn during prayer.
- Afternoon and evening prayers usually take around 15 minutes.

Women can also pray, but they are not required to wear phylacteries or shawls during prayer.

Synagogue etiquette varies depending on the denomination of Judaism to which a person belongs.

- In Orthodox synagogues women sit separately from men, either upstairs in the gallery or to the side of men. Men wear the traditional head covering. Married women cover their heads with hats, wigs or scarves and are expected to dress modestly.
- At Reform and Liberal synagogues men and women will usually sit together during the service.

Hebrew is the traditional language of Jewish prayer, and is used to varying degrees in the services and celebrations of each denomination.

A Torah scroll being carried by the worshippers who are wearing tefillin



THE JEWISH LIFE CYCLE

Practical Policing Issues on Burial and Mourning

- The body should never be left unaccompanied, and it is vital that there is as little interference with the body as possible
- Eyes and jaws should be closed and the body covered with a white sheet
- The funeral should take place as soon as possible following the death, often on the same day
- In Strictly Orthodox communities there may be large crowds in the streets to mourn the deceased



THE JEWISH LIFE CYCLE

Birth

Every Jewish boy is required to be circumcised in a ceremony called *brit milah*. This takes place when the baby is eight days old, or as soon as possible thereafter if there are medical reasons for a delay. The circumcision is performed by a *mohel*, a trained Jewish practitioner who may also be a registered medical doctor. The boy's name is frequently not announced until the circumcision.

Girls are usually named in the synagogue, often on the sabbath following the birth.

Barmitzvah / Batmitzvah

Boys are recognised as full adult members of the community at age 13, when they celebrate their *barmitzvah* (literally 'son of the commandments'). Girls reach this stage at 12 when they celebrate their *batmitzvah*. Both boys and girls have a period of intense study leading up to the occasion.

Weddings

Jewish weddings can occur any day of the week except the sabbath, Jewish festivals and particular mourning periods in the Jewish calendar.

A Jewish wedding may take place in any location, but is commonly held in a synagogue. It is traditional for the couple's friends and family to organise celebratory meals during the week after the wedding.

Death and Mourning

When a Jewish person dies it is crucial that the body is treated with care and extreme reverence at all times. There are special rules for the preparation of the body for burial, and the body should not be left unattended at any time.

Post-mortems are not permitted in Jewish law except where required under civil law. Cremation is practised in some Reform and Liberal communities, but is strictly prohibited in Orthodox Jewish communities.

After the funeral the immediate family of the deceased mourn at home for seven days. This is known as the *shiva* period.

The bride and groom are married under a four-poster canopy called a *Chuppah*.



WELFARE ISSUES



WELFARE ISSUES

Medical Treatment

There are religious guidelines governing abortion, organ transplantation and donation, fertility treatment and contraception. Apart from these, all treatments necessary to save a life, particularly in an emergency, should be carried out without question or delay.

According to Jewish law, blood transfusions are permitted. Indeed, they are mandatory if required to ensure a person's good health.

In case of queries contact the relevant *Beth Din* (a religious advisory body in London and Manchester) if no local source is available.

Domestic and Child Abuse

Sadly such matters are not absent from the Jewish community. As in other communities they are often hidden and not spoken about within families, so it is often helpful to resolve such issues with the help of special communal agencies who have trained counsellors able to provide aid and reassurance. If this is not possible, however, any concerns should be reported to social services and/or the police.

HELPFUL CONTACTS

1. Representative Organisations
2. Social Services, Adoption and Fostering
3. Religious Organisations
4. Regional Contacts
5. Kosher Caterers



HELPFUL CONTACTS

1. REPRESENTATIVE ORGANISATIONS

CST

CST is the British Jewish community's defence organisation and exists to protect the community from antisemitism and terrorist threats. It provides trained security volunteers for Jewish synagogues, Jewish schools and events. It also has a strong relationship with the government and police, and represents the community on Gold Strategy Groups and IAGs.

020 8457 9999 (London – Head Office)

0161 792 6666 (Manchester – Northern Regional Office)

www.thecst.org.uk

Board of Deputies of British Jews

The elected representative body of the British Jewish community. It provides information and collects social and demographic data on, and for, the community.

020 7543 5400

www.bod.org.uk.

Jewish Police Association

Established in order to provide a network for support and advice to Jewish personnel within the police service, and to promote understanding of the Jewish faith within the police service.

020 7161 0718

07770 492 782

www.jewishpoliceassociation.org.uk

2. SOCIAL SERVICES, ADOPTION AND FOSTERING

Drugline

An independent drugs crisis information and support charity, providing free and confidential advice for people with drugs and alcohol related problems.

0808 1 606 606

www.drugline.org

Hospital Kosher Meals Service

Provides supervised kosher meals to patients in hospital throughout London.

020 8795 2058

hkms@btconnect.com

Jewish Bereavement Counselling Service

The JBCS consists of a team of professionally trained volunteer counsellors trained to work with people of all ages.

020 8385 1874

jbcsc@jvisit.org.uk

Jewish Care

The largest provider of health and social care services for the Jewish community in the UK, caring for over 7000 people each week.

020 8922 2000

www.jewishcare.org

Jewish Women's Aid

JWA assists Jewish women and their children who have been subjected to domestic violence. It operates a confidential freephone helpline.

0800 591 203

www.jwa.org.uk

info@jwa.org.uk

Norwood

Provides a range of over 60 specialist support services such as social work, counselling, residential and day care facilities, adoption services, special education needs services and care for people of all ages with physical and learning disabilities.

020 8954 4555

www.norwood.org.uk

Federation of Jewish Services (merger of The Fed and Heathlands Village)

The main provider of welfare and care services for Manchester's Jewish community.

0161 772 4800

www.fjs.org.uk

3. RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS

Beth Din

The Beth Din fulfils the following functions for the Orthodox Jewish Community – supervision of marriages, divorces, adoptions and conversions; certification of religious status; supervision of shechita and kashrut

London

020 8343 6313

info@bethdin.org.uk

Manchester

0161 740 9711

www.mbd.org.uk

Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations

020 8802 6226

United Synagogue

020 8343 8989

www.theus.org.uk

Federation of Synagogues

020 8202 2263

www.federationofsynagogues.com

Movement for Reform Judaism

020 8349 5640

www.reformjudaism.org.uk

Assembly of Masorti Synagogues

020 8349 6650

www.masorti.org.uk

Liberal Judaism

020 7580 1663

www.liberaljudaism.org

4. REGIONAL CONTACTS

Birmingham	0121 236 1801	Leeds	0113 269 7520
Bournemouth	01202 396139	Liverpool	0151 733 2292
Cardiff	029 2048 8198	Manchester	0161 720 8721
Glasgow	0141 638 6411	Newcastle	0191 284 8885
		Southend	0170 247 1934

Almost all major regional Jewish communities have a Representative Council, who will be pleased to assist you in your work.

5. KOSHER CATERERS

A full list of caterers can be obtained from the London Beth Din. However, the following company provides pre-packaged meals.

Hermolis & Co Ltd

020 8810 4321

www.hermolis.com

DATES OF JEWISH FESTIVALS 2010 - 2015

Festival	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Rosh Hashanah	Sept 8-10	Sept 28-30	Sept 16-18	Sept 4-6	Sept 24-26
Yom Kippur	Sept 17-18	Oct 7-8	Sept 25-26	Sept 13-14	Oct 5-4
Succot	Sept 22-30	Oct 12-20	Sept 30 - Oct 8	Sept 18-26	Oct 8-16
Simchat Torah	Oct 1	Oct 21	Oct 9	Sept 27	Oct 17
Chanukah	Dec 2-9	Dec 21-28	Dec 9-17	Nov 28- Dec 5	Dec 17-24
Purim	March 20	March 8	Feb 24	March 16	March 5
Pesach	April 18-26	April 8-14	March 25 - April 3	April 14-22	April 3-11
Shavuot	June 7-9	May 26-28	May 14-16	June 3-5	May 23-25

NB: All Jewish festivals commence at sundown on the previous evening

This booklet has been produced by CST to provide information to the police and others concerning the requirements of practising Jews in the United Kingdom.

It has been designed to further your knowledge and understanding of the Jewish community, and also to provide you with some practical assistance within the context of operational policing.

This is not a definitive guide, but offers an introductory insight into some of the customs, laws and traditions of the Jewish community.



London (Head Office)

020 8457 9999

Emergency 24 hr pager

07659 101 668

Manchester

(Northern Regional Office)

0161 792 6666

Emergency 24 hr number

0800 980 0668

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Home Office

www.thecst.org.uk

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