

Pentagon's new gay rule

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Military troops may be investigated for hand-holding, kissing or even carrying a certain type of placard in a gay-rights parade, the Pentagon said Wednesday in new regulations explaining its ban on homosexual conduct.

But under the new policy, commanders are advised not to go on "witch hunts" to ferret out suspected homosexuals.

The new regulations, which are to go into effect Feb. 5, are designed to give precise definitions of homosexual conduct and conditions that would prompt an investigation that could lead to a

service member being removed from the military.

The new rules cap an agonizing year in which President Clinton, faced with strong opposition, abandoned his campaign pledge to lift the 50-year-old ban on homosexuals outright. He had to settle for a policy that differs only slightly from the old rules, given the strength of opposition from Congress and the Pentagon's top admirals and generals.

Outgoing Defense Secretary Les Aspin defended the compromise on the "enormously divisive and emotional" issue at a Pentagon briefing.

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Archdiocese of Santa Fe asking parishes for cash

Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — The Archdiocese of Santa Fe is asking parishes for cash to help it avoid bankruptcy as it grapples with scores of sex-abuse lawsuits that could cost up to \$50 million.

"This is a serious issue, not a little game we're playing," the Rev. Ron Wolf, archdiocese chancellor, said Wednesday. "We're dealing with a financial struggle."

The struggle was taken to parishes Sunday when a letter from Archbishop Michael Sheehan was read from the pulpits or inserted in bulletins at the archdiocese's 91 churches.

A spokesman for the National Conference of Catholic Bishops said he knew of no diocese or archdiocese that filed for bankruptcy protection — and of no other archdiocese that appealed

to parishes for financial help.

"Archbishop Sheehan is trying to deal with a very difficult situation and taking the steps he needs to take," Monsignor Francis J. Maniscalco said from his Washington, D.C., office.

The Albuquerque-based Roman Catholic archdiocese has been hit by claims by adults that they were sexually abused as children by priests and former priests and by the resignation of Archbishop Robert Sanchez in March.

Sanchez, alleged to have been sexually involved with young women in the 1970s and perhaps the 1980s, has been in seclusion since his resignation.

Many of the priests or former priests named in the lawsuits came to New Mexico to attend a treatment center for pedophilia and related problems.

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