



Workplace Disclosure Guide

What is a disability?

The **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** defines a person with a disability as *a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity (including work). This includes people who have a record of such an impairment, even if they do not currently have a disability.*

Examples of a disability include (but are not limited to):

- Blindness
- Depression & Anxiety
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Epilepsy
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- ADHD
- Diabetes
- Pregnancy
- Physical Disabilities
- Deaf & Hard of Hearing
- Temporary Injury
- Cancer

What are accommodations?

A **Reasonable Accommodation** is defined as any modification or adjustment to a job, work environment, or the way things are usually done that enables a qualified individual with a disability to enjoy an equal employment opportunity. This includes modifications to job application process, work environment, and workplace benefits.

Examples of Reasonable Accommodations include (but are not limited to):

- Text-to-speech devices
- Alternative work schedules
- Workplace Aides
- Noise Cancelling Headphones
- Alternative Lighting
- Additional timers/calendars
- Written Instructions
- Mobile Meditation Apps
- Increased Supervision
- Specialized Seating
- Writing Aids
- Service Animals

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The ADA is a law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life (including work), and all public and private places that are open to the general public. This law is to make sure that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else.

A comprehensive list of recognized disabilities and accommodations can be found at the **Job Accommodation Network: askjan.org/a-to-z**

How do I know when to request an accommodation?

You can request an accommodation at any time during the application process or while you are employed. You can request an accommodation even if you did not ask for one when applying for a job or after receiving a job offer. You should request an accommodation when you know that there is a workplace barrier that is preventing you, due to a disability, from competing for a job, performing a job, or gaining equal access to a benefit of employment. **It is recommended to request an accommodation before your job performance suffers** or conduct problems occur.

How much should I tell my employer about my disability?

Under the ADA employers are **only** required to provide accommodations for employees whom they are aware are experiencing workplace problems because of a disability. **If an employer is unaware of an employee's disability they are not obligated to consider workplace accommodations.**

Some employees do not want to give their employers a lot of details about their disability. **You may choose to limit the medical information you initially give to your employer when you request an accommodation.** For example, you may want to tell your employer what you are having trouble doing, that the problem is related to a disability, and what your accommodation ideas are. Some employers will not ask for more information. However, employers have the right to request additional medical information when an employee requests an accommodation and if you do not provide it, the employer can deny your accommodation request.



How do I request an accommodation?

According to ADA and EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission) you only have to let your employer know that you need an adjustment or change at work for a reason related to a medical condition. Requests can be made using 'plain language' and do not need to reference ADA or 'reasonable accommodations.'

However, it is best practice to identify your disability and needed accommodations before making an employer request. Use the chart below to better identify your specified need(s):

Disability and/or Workplace Challenge	Relevant Accommodations
Ex: Autism Spectrum Disorder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased access to written instructions • Noise cancelling headphones • Flexible schedules to accommodate therapy appointments

Once you have identified your needed accommodations it is your responsibility to initiate the request. While **requests are not required to be in written form**, you may consider submitting a written request in case of work-accommodation-related disputes.

Below are some examples of what this process might look like:

An employee tells her supervisor, "I'm having trouble getting to work at my scheduled starting time because of medical treatments I'm undergoing." This is a request for a reasonable accommodation.	An employee tells his supervisor, "I need six weeks off to get treatment for a back problem." This is a request for a reasonable accommodation.	A new employee, who uses a wheelchair, informs the employer that her wheelchair cannot fit under the desk in her office. This is a request for reasonable accommodation.	An employee tells his supervisor that he would like a new chair because his present one is uncomfortable. Although this is a request for a change at work, his statement is insufficient to put the employer on notice that he is requesting reasonable accommodation. He does not link his need for the new chair with a medical condition.
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What are my rights?

While most conflict related to workplace accommodations can be resolved by increased communication, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 offers several protections through the **US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission**.

If an employer denies your request for an accommodation we first recommend contacting your employer to resolve any potential lapses in communication. **However, if you feel an employer does not have a valid reason to deny your request, retaliates against your request for an accommodation, or engages in discriminatory practices, you may file a complaint with the EEOC or your state's enforcing agency by going to: <https://www.eeoc.gov/how-file-charge-employment-discrimination>**



We also recommend contacting OSU Career Services for further guidance.

Where can I go to find out more?

For help finding positions go to:

- [Ability Jobs.com](#)
- [Bender Consulting Services](#)
- [disABLEDperson](#)
- [Disability Employment Source](#)
- [Recruit Disability](#)
- [LIME Connect](#)
- [Hire Disability Solutions](#)

For more information on your workplace rights go to:

- [The Job Accommodation Network](#)
- [EEOC.gov](#)
- [Equal Opportunity Publications](#)
- [US Department of Labor](#)
- [OSU Student Support Services](#)

