

OCHR FACTSHEET

Reasonable Accommodations Guidance

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REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

This Fact Sheet:

- Defines reasonable accommodation
- Describes a reasonable accommodation request
- Provides links to the DON policies and procedures on reasonable accommodation

Background on Reasonable Accommodations

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities in all aspects of the employment relationship to include terms, conditions and privileges of employment. The Act requires employers to provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities who are employees or applicants for employment.

What is a Reasonable Accommodation?

An accommodation is any change in the work environment or in the way things are customarily done that enables an individual with a disability to enjoy equal employment opportunities.

It is the policy of the Department of the Navy (DON) that all military and civilian supervisors and employees to make every effort to provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals and applicants with disabilities unless doing so would create an undue hardship.

Three categories of reasonable accommodation:

Application Process	Performing Essential Functions	Benefits and Privileges
Modifications or adjustments to a job application process that enables a qualified applicant with a disability to be considered for the position	Modifications or adjustments to the work environment, or circumstances under which the position is customarily performed, that enables a qualified individual with a disability to perform the essential functions of the position	Modifications or adjustments that enable an employee with a disability to enjoy equal access to benefits and privileges of employment (i.e. training, services, programs, parties and other social functions) as are enjoyed by other similarly situated employees without disabilities



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Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is a reasonable accommodation request?

A. A request for a reasonable accommodation occurs when an employee or their representative makes the agency aware that the employee needs an adjustment or change at work for a reason related to a medical condition. When requesting an accommodation, an individual may use "plain English" and need not mention the Americans with Disabilities Act, Rehabilitation Act or use the phrase "reasonable accommodation." A verbal request is sufficient to place the agency on notice to begin the reasonable accommodation process.

- The following are examples of reasonable accommodation requests from employees and/or an employee's representative:
 - "I'm having trouble getting to work at my scheduled starting time because of medical treatments I'm undergoing."
 - "I need six weeks off to get treatment for a back problem."
 - An employee's spouse phones the employee's supervisor on Monday morning to inform her that the employee had a medical emergency due to multiple sclerosis, needed to be hospitalized and requires time off.

Q. What do I do if I believe an employee is making a reasonable accommodation request?

A. Supervisors and managers should initially clarify that the employee is requesting a reasonable accommodation. If the employee says no, the agency has met its obligation. If the employee says yes, supervisors and managers must engage in a conversation with the employee to make an informed decision about the request. If the individual's disability is not obvious, the supervisor or manager may need to ask questions concerning the nature of the disability and any functional limitations in order to identify an effective accommodation. Supervisors and managers must seek assistance from the servicing Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) or Human Resources (HR) Offices in processing the request.

Q. How quickly must a reasonable accommodation be provided?

A. The Department of the Navy requires a decision on the request for a reasonable accommodation to be made within 30 calendar days. Once a decision is made to provide a reasonable accommodation, Commands must provide the accommodation as quickly as possible. Any delays may result in a violation of the Rehabilitation Act.

Getting Started – Contact your servicing EEO or HR Office

After a supervisor or manager receives a reasonable accommodation request, he/she must contact their servicing EEO or HR Office for assistance to ensure the request is processed in accordance with DON policies and procedures.

- DON policies and procedures regarding reasonable accommodations are listed below and can be found on the internal portal:

<https://portal.secnnav.navy.mil/orgs/MRA/DONHR/EEO/Pages/disability.aspx>

- Civilian Human Resources Manual, Subchapter 1606 – Procedures for Processing Requests for Reasonable Accommodations
- Guide for Processing Reasonable Accommodation Requests
- Guidance and Advisory Memorandum # 86 – Reassignment as a Reasonable Accommodation

Still Need Assistance?

For additional questions on reasonable accommodations, email DONhrfaq@navy.mil.



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REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION (RA) PROCESS

