



Current as of: 06 Oct 2020

CIVILIAN PERSONNEL SECTION FACT SHEET

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

GENERAL PURPOSE: Air Force commanders and supervisors must reasonably accommodate qualified employees or applicants with a disability, unless the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the Department of the Air Force.

WHAT IS REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION?

Reasonable accommodation is an adjustment or alteration that enables a qualified person with a disability to apply for a job, perform job duties, or enjoy equal benefits and privileges in employment equal to those of employees without disabilities. The concept of reasonable accommodation applies to all aspects of employment, including recruitment, work location and scheduled training, promotion, reassignment, and developmental assignments. Examples of reasonable accommodations are as follows:

- Adaptive equipment
- Requests for a reader or sign language interpreter, or other staff assistance
- Removal of architectural barriers
- Reconfiguration of work space
- Materials in alternative formats (e.g. Braille, large print)
- Requests for reassignment for which the employee is eligible

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION?

Any individual with a disability who (1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; (2) has a record of such impairment; or (3) is regarded as having such impairment.

WHEN IS THE AIR FORCE REQUIRED TO MAKE A REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION? The Air Force is only required to accommodate a “known” disability of a qualified applicant or employee. The requirement generally will be triggered by a request from an individual with a disability. If the individual does not request an accommodation, the employer is not obligated to provide one except where an individual’s known disability impairs his/her ability to know of, or effectively communicate a need for, an accommodation that is obvious to the employer.

HOW IS REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION REQUESTED? The individual requesting the accommodation may submit a request or designate someone to submit on their behalf. The member or designee submit the request with supportive medical documentation. The request does not have to use any special words, such as “reasonable accommodation,” “disability,” or “Rehabilitation Act.” Submit the request directly to the servicing CPS Disability Program Manager (DPM), Margaret Harlan Sumners.

Email: 86fss.fsec.us-emr@us.af.mil. Ensure the form and recent (2 weeks) medical documentation are submitted all together.

RESOURCES: 29 CFR 1630;
AFI-2710 (18 Jun 2020) - Personal Assistance Services (Section 12) and updated Reasonable Accommodation procedures (Section 13).

Reasonable accommodation policy includes:

- 1) Clarification of RA documenting procedures
- 2) Guidance on the use of service animals
- 3) Requirements for facility/program accessibility
- 4) Clarification on denying reasonable accommodations
- 5) [Reasonable Accommodation Request Form](#) (Attached)
- 6) [AF RA Fact Sheet for Employee's](#) (Attached)
- 7) [AF RA Fact Sheet for Supv's](#) (Attached)

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION REQUEST FORM

A. Questions to clarify accommodation requested.

What specific accommodation are you requesting?

If you are not sure what accommodation is needed, do you have any suggestions about what options we can explore? Yes No

If yes, please explain.

Is your accommodation request time sensitive? Yes No

If yes, please explain.

B. Questions to document the reason for accommodation request.

What, if any, job function are you having difficulty performing?

What, if any, employment benefit are you having difficulty accessing?

What limitation is interfering with your ability to perform your job or access an employment benefit?

Have you had any accommodations in the past for this same limitation? Yes No

If yes, what were they and how effective were they?

If you are requesting a specific accommodation, how will that accommodation assist you?

C. Other.

Please provide any additional information that might be useful in processing your accommodation request, along with recent medical documentation supporting the request:

Yes Recent (two weeks) supportive medical documentation MUST be provided at time of request.

Employees Signature

Date

Return to: 86 FSS/CPF_US-EMR,
86fss.fsec.us-emr@us.af.mil



U.S. AIR FORCE

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION FACTSHEET FOR EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES

Air Force Equal Opportunity Policy Office - SAF/MRQ

What is a reasonable accommodation?

Reasonable accommodation (RA) is a modification to a job or work environment, or to a policy or procedure to enable a qualified applicant or employee with a disability to participate in the application process or to perform essential job functions.

Is providing a reasonable accommodation required?

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 USC §791 et seq.) as amended by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, as amended (42 USC §12101 et seq.) requires all federal agencies to provide reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with disabilities who are employees or applicants for employment, unless to do so would cause undue hardship. Air Force policy on the provision of RA is set forth in AFI 36-205.

What is an undue hardship?

An undue hardship is an action that requires "significant difficulty or expense" in relation to: overall size of the agency's program with respect to the number of employees; number and type of facilities and size of budget; type of operation, including the composition and structure of the agency's workforce; and nature and cost of the accommodation. An agency is not required to make an accommodation if it can demonstrate that providing the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on its everyday operations.

Section 501 of the
Rehabilitation Act

**The Rehabilitation Act of
1973, protects qualified
employees and applicants
with disabilities in the
Executive Branch of the
Federal Government from
employment
discrimination based on
disability. It requires
federal agencies to provide
reasonable
accommodation for known
physical or mental
disabilities to qualified
employees and applicants,
unless to do so would
cause an undue hardship.**

**The Law also ensures
equal access to Federal
programs, activities, and
facilities for people with
disabilities.**

What does a reasonable accommodation do?

Reasonable accommodation ensures that a qualified person with a disability has the same rights and privileges of employment as those without disabilities. It does not alter or lower the standards or expectations, but they do work around limitations caused by the disability.

How do I ask for a reasonable accommodation?

If you need an accommodation, you should tell your first line supervisor or others in your chain of command (1) that you have a disability (unless your disability is obvious), (2) how your disability interferes with your ability to do your job functions, and (3) what accommodations you need in order to do your job functions. Your local Disability Program Manager (DPM) may also be able to assist you. Although you may make your request orally or in writing, it is better practice to put your request in writing so you have a record of it. Your supervisor should respond in writing within 10 business days.

What documentation can my supervisor request?

If the need for an accommodation is not obvious (e.g. an employee uses a wheelchair), a supervisor can ask the employee for reasonable supporting documentation. This is documentation sufficient to establish that the employee has a covered disability and establish the need for the accommodation the employee seeks. The documentation should not be a “blank check” to seek the employee’s entire medical record. Medical information is confidential, must not be disclosed to anyone who does not have a need to know, and must be filed separate from personnel files. Unauthorized disclosure of medical information is a violation of the law.

What is the interactive process?

The interactive process is the discussion that takes place between the employee and the supervisor (augmented by the DPM as needed) to determine what limitations the individual is experiencing due to a medical impairment, clarify what the individual needs, and identify what accommodations might be helpful in working around those limitations.

What kind of actions may reasonably accommodate employees?

An accommodation may involve making an existing facility readily accessible; modifying work schedules, hours, policies or methods; acquiring or modifying equipment; providing qualified readers or interpreters; or modifying examinations, training, or other programs. As a last resort, RA may include reassigning a current employee to a vacant position for which the individual is qualified. In selecting the particular RA, the principal test is that the device, service, or modification of policy or method must be effective so that it enables the individual to apply for the job, to perform the essential functions of the job, and to have equal access to the facility, information, activity or event.

Is my supervisor obligated to provide any accommodation that I request?

No. Once your employer knows about your need for an accommodation, he or she must engage in an interactive process with you to help determine what accommodations might be appropriate. Your employer does not have to provide the exact accommodation you are requesting, but must have meaningful discussions with you about what will work and what is reasonable. Employers must make reasonable efforts to determine the appropriate

accommodation for you, by consulting with you and giving primary consideration to your preference. The employer may select a less expensive alternative as long as it is appropriate and meets your needs.

How can I work with my supervisor to obtain a reasonable accommodation?

You should participate in the process of developing or implementing the accommodation. If you and your employer do not initially agree on the accommodation, you can offer your employer a referral to accommodation specialists such as the Computer Electronic Accommodation Program (CAP) at www.cap.mil or the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) at www.askjan.org. You can also contact your local DPM or EO Office for assistance.

What should I do if my accommodation request is denied?

You should be notified in writing if your request for reasonable accommodation is denied and no alternative accommodation is offered. The denial must include specific reasons for the denial and the employee or office that made the decision. Your manager must notify inform you that you have a right to file an EEO complaint, the procedures for doing so, as well as identify and explain any avenues available for informal dispute resolution For disability-related complaint procedures, see [AFI 36-2706](#), *Equal Opportunity Program, Military and Civilian*.

Where should I go for more information about reasonable accommodation?

The installation Disability Program Manager or servicing Civilian Personnel Office may be contacted for information on reasonable accommodation. Additional information may also be found on the Equal Employment Opportunity website at <https://www.eeoc.gov/policy/docs/accommodation.html>.



U.S. AIR FORCE

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION FACTSHEET FOR SUPERVISORS OF EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES

Air Force Equal Opportunity Policy Office - SAF/MRQ

What is a reasonable accommodation?

Reasonable accommodation (RA) is a modification to a job or work environment, or to a policy or procedure to enable a qualified applicant or employee with a disability to participate in the application process or to perform essential job functions.

What does a reasonable accommodation accomplish?

Reasonable accommodation ensures that a qualified person with a disability has the same rights and privileges of employment as those without disabilities. It does not alter or lower the standards or expectations, but they do work around limitations caused by the disability. Is providing a reasonable accommodation required?

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How should an employee request a reasonable accommodation?

A person with a disability can make the request orally or in writing. The individual need only note that they are experiencing some limitation due to a medical condition. They need not use any special language such as “disability” or “reasonable accommodation.” The request may be made by the individual or by a third party on behalf of the individual. The request may be made to a supervisor or manager in the individual’s immediate chain of command or to the Disability Program Manager (DPM). This triggers the “interactive process”. Once triggered, it is critical that the process proceed promptly without any unnecessary delay

When the supervisor receives the reasonable accommodation request, he or she shall acknowledge receipt of the request and enter into an interactive dialogue process within 10 business days of the request. The reasonable accommodation process begins as soon as the oral or written request is made to any supervisor in the employee’s chain of command. Therefore, communication is a priority throughout the entire process. The supervisor/manager will take a proactive approach in searching out and considering possible accommodations, including consulting the DPM, medical personnel and other appropriate resources for assistance, and will explain the process to the employee.

What documentation can a supervisor request?

If the need for an accommodation is not obvious (e.g. an employee uses a wheelchair), a supervisor can ask the employee for reasonable supporting documentation. This is documentation sufficient to establish that the employee has a covered disability and establish the need for the accommodation the employee seeks. The documentation should not be a “blank check” to seek the employee’s entire medical record. Medical information is confidential, must not be disclosed to anyone who does not have a need to know, and must be filed separate from personnel files. Unauthorized disclosure of medical information is a violation of the law.

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Is a supervisor obligated to provide any accommodation that is requested?

No. Once a supervisor has been made aware of a need for an accommodation, he or she must engage in an interactive process to help determine what accommodations might be appropriate. The Supervisor does not have to provide the exact accommodation requested, but must have meaningful discussions with the employee about what will work and what is reasonable. Supervisors must make reasonable efforts to determine the appropriate accommodation by consulting with the employee and giving primary consideration to his/her

preference. The supervisor may select a less expensive alternative as long as it is effective and enables the employee with a disability to perform the essential functions of his/her job.

Who is the decision authority for reasonable accommodation?

The first level supervisor is the decision authority for reasonable accommodation. Once you are aware there may be a need for reasonable accommodation, contact the local DPM who will assist in identifying the employee's limitations, and in identifying accommodations to work around the limitations.

Who pays for any necessary devices or equipment needed as a reasonable accommodation?

Much of the special equipment, devices, and assistive technology is provided at no cost by the DoD Computer/Electronics Accommodations Program (CAP).

Commanders have a legal obligation to provide reasonable accommodations to employees with disabilities. An ESP code (7F) has been established to track all requests for reasonable accommodation. This will allow organizations (at all levels) to properly plan for yearly RA costs. Should an organization be forced to defer another requirement in order to support a reasonable accommodation request, then an unfunded request can be submitted through that organization's established corporate process. Therefore, funding shortfalls are not a valid basis for denial of reasonable accommodations

What if I deny a request for reassignment?

Supervisors must notify the employee in writing if a request for reasonable accommodation is denied and no alternative accommodation is offered. The denial must include specific reasons for the denial and the employee or office that made the decision. The supervisor must notify inform the employee of his/her right to file an EEO complaint, the procedures for doing so, as well as identify and explain any avenues available for informal dispute resolution For disability-related complaint procedures, see [AFI 36-2706](#), *Equal Opportunity Program, Military and Civilian*.

If I provide a RA to an employee and other employees ask why the employee has special equipment or a modification to policy or procedure, what can I tell them?

You may tell them it is a private matter and in compliance with federal policy. You may not reveal any information, to include that a RA was requested. All RA requests must remain confidential. If the employee with the RA chooses to share the information, that is the employee's choice but it does not release you from your requirement to keep the information confidential.

Where should I go for more information about reasonable accommodation?

The Disability Program Manager or servicing Civilian Personnel Office may be contacted for information on reasonable accommodation. Additional information may also be found on the Equal Employment Opportunity website at <https://www.eeoc.gov/policy/docs/accommodation.html>.