



Reasonable Accommodation: Blindness and Vision Impairments

Frequently asked questions about Blindness and Vision Impairments and accommodation excerpted from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Enforcement Guidance. (www.eeoc.gov)

Vision impairment may result in a loss of visual acuity, where an individual does not see objects as clearly as the average person, and/or in a loss of visual field, meaning that an individual cannot see as wide an area as the average person without moving the eyes or turning the head.

Persons with vision impairments successfully perform a wide range of jobs and can be dependable workers.

What types of reasonable accommodations may people with visual disabilities need?

People with visual disabilities may need one or more of the following accommodations:

- Assistive technology, including:
 - A closed circuit television system (CCTV) for reading printed materials
 - An external computer screen magnifier
 - Cassette or digital recorders
 - Software that will read information on the computer screen
 - An optical scanner that can create documents in electronic form from printed ones
- Written materials in an accessible format, such as in large print, Braille, audio cassette, or computer disk
- Modification of employer policies to allow use of a guide dog in the workplace
- Modification of an employment test
- A reader
- A driver or payment for the cost of transportation to enable performance of essential functions
- An accessible website
- Modified training or training in the use of assistive technology
- A modified work schedule
- Time off, in the form of accrued paid leave or unpaid leave if paid leave has been exhausted or is unavailable
- Reassignment to a vacant position

Although these represent some examples of the types of accommodations commonly requested by applicants or employees with visual disabilities, other employees may need different changes or adjustments. Further, although a particular accommodation may work for one person, an employer should not assume that the same accommodation will work for another person with the same apparent visual disability.

Division of Risk Management and Insurance Services, Integrated Disability Management coordinates reasonable accommodation, stay at work/return to work, absence management and FMLA leaves. For more information on these programs or a copy of this document in an alternative format: Email: disabilitymanagement@lausd.net Website: <http://reasonableaccommodation.lausd.net>



An employer does not have to remove an essential job function (i.e., a fundamental job duty), lower production standards, excuse violations of conduct rules that are job-related and consistent with business necessity, or provide employees with personal use items, such as eyeglasses or other devices that are used both on and off the job.

How does a person with a vision impairment request an accommodation?

The request for a reasonable accommodation must be communicated to the employer. However, no magic words (e.g., "reasonable accommodation" or "ADA") are needed. The request may be made in plain English, orally, or in writing, and it may come from the applicant/employee or from a family member, friend, or other representative.

Does an employer have to provide the specific reasonable accommodation the person wants?

No. The employer may choose among different reasonable accommodations as long as the chosen accommodation is effective. Therefore, as part of the interactive process, the employer may offer more than one suggestion for a reasonable accommodation. Where two possible reasonable accommodations exist, and one costs more or is more burdensome than the other, the employer may choose the less expensive or less burdensome option as long as it is effective. Similarly, when there are two or more effective accommodations, the employer may choose the one that is easier to provide. The preference of the person with the disability should be given primary consideration.

May an employer ask for documentation when a person requests a reasonable accommodation because of a vision impairment?

Sometimes. When a person's vision impairment is not obvious, the employer may ask the person to provide reasonable documentation about how the condition limits major life activities (i.e., whether the person has a disability) and why a reasonable accommodation is needed. The request for documentation must be reasonable. An employer may not ask for information about conditions unrelated to the one for which accommodation has been requested or more information than is necessary for the employer to determine whether an accommodation is needed.

Keeping Medical Information Confidential

An employer must keep all medical information separate from general personnel files and treat it as a separate, confidential medical record. Issues regarding confidentiality more frequently arise in regard to non-obvious conditions; however, even if the impairment is obvious, information about it must be kept confidential.

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