

## Reasonable Accommodation Process

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires federal agencies to provide reasonable accommodation to qualified employees or applicants with disabilities, unless to do so would cause undue hardship.

### Essential Functions:

The essential functions of a job are those duties that are so fundamental to the position that the individual cannot do the job without being able to perform them.

- A **disability** is a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities; the individual has a record of such impairment; or is regarded as having such an impairment.
- A **reasonable accommodation** is a change involving the workplace that enables a person with a disability to perform the essential functions of his/her position.
- An **undue hardship** means that a specific accommodation would require significant difficulty or expense to the Agency.

### Procedures for Requesting an Accommodation:

The following procedures should be followed to initiate a request for medical accommodation:

- Contact the EEO Office, 678-1291/2831 to initiate process (employee or supervisor)
- Employee provides medical documentation to EEO Office
  - It is the employee's responsibility to provide appropriate medical information related to the functional impairment at issue and the requested accommodation.
  - The Agency has the right to request relevant supplemental medical information if the information submitted does not clearly explain the nature of the disability or the need for the accommodation, or does not otherwise clarify how the requested accommodation will assist the employee to perform the essential functions of the job or to enjoy the benefits and privileges of the workplace.
  - The agency has the right to have medical information reviewed by a medical expert of the agency's choosing at the Agency's expense.

\* Medical documentation includes but is not limited to, the following information:

- The nature, severity, and duration of the individual's impairment;

- The activity or activities that the impairment limits;
  - The extent to which the impairment limits the individual's ability to perform the activities, and/or
  - Why the individual requires reasonable accommodation or the particular reasonable accommodation requested, as well as how the reasonable accommodation will assist the individual to apply for a job, perform the essential functions of the job, or enjoy a benefit of the workplace.
- Manager/supervisor provides Certificate of Medical Examination, Form SF78 to EEO Office

The EEO Office will administer the accommodation process. A final decision on the request for reasonable accommodation will be provided by the Director of the employee's organization.

If the agency cannot make reasonable accommodation, the employee may be eligible for Disability Retirement or may be separated from Federal service.

### **Duration of a Reasonable Accommodation:**

Reasonable accommodation due to a medical disability can remain in effect until such time as the accommodation is determined to be no longer necessary by a medical professional in consultation with management. As turnover of supervisors occurs, the incoming supervisor should comply with the specified accommodations. An accommodated employee should keep his/her supervisor informed of their approved accommodations as turnover of supervisory personnel occurs.

### **Typical Process Outline**

1. Employee requests medical accommodations or indicates he/she is unable to perform essential duties of position due to medical reasons.
2. Employee contacts their supervisor, EEO Office, CPAC Office and/or Occupational Health.
3. EEO Office administers accommodation process.
4. EEO Office works with management and the employee to obtain appropriate documentation (i.e. medical documentation, job description, SF 78, etc).
5. EEO Office submits documentation to Occupational Health.
6. White Sands McAfee Health Clinic, Occupational Health makes medical accommodation recommendation.
7. CPAC Office coordinates recommendation with management.

8. Management makes determination as to whether reasonable accommodation can be made.
9. Can reasonable accommodation be made?
  - a. If yes, management implements.
  - b. If no, employee may apply for medical retirement or may be separated from service.

For a process flowchart, please click [here](#).

**If you have questions in relation to reasonable accommodations, please contact the White Sands Program for Individuals with Disabilities Manager at 678-2831/1291.**