

# JAN

Job Accommodation Network

Practical Solutions • Workplace Success

## Accommodation and Compliance Series

# Accommodation and Compliance Series: Epilepsy/Seizure Disorder

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Employment Policy, U.S. Department of Labor

## Preface

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JAN does not endorse or recommend any products or services mentioned in this publication. Although every effort is made to update resources, JAN encourages contacting product manufacturers/vendors and service providers directly to ensure that they meet the intended purposes. This guarantees that the most up-to-date information is obtained.

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## JAN'S Accommodation and Compliance Series

### Introduction

JAN's Accommodation and Compliance Series is designed to help employers determine effective accommodations and comply with Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Each publication in the series addresses a specific medical condition and provides information about the condition, ADA information, accommodation ideas, and resources for additional information.

The Accommodation and Compliance Series is a starting point in the accommodation process and may not address every situation. Accommodations should be made on a case by case basis, considering each employee's individual limitations and accommodation needs. Employers are encouraged to contact JAN to discuss specific situations in more detail.

For information on assistive technology and other accommodation ideas, visit JAN's Searchable Online Accommodation Resource (SOAR) at <https://AskJAN.org/soar>.

### Information about Epilepsy/Seizure Disorder

Epilepsy is the tendency to have repeated seizures that originate in the brain. There are several types of possible seizures that range from losing consciousness and massive muscles jerks to blank stares. For example, generalized tonic clonic seizures, also called grand mal seizures, look like the individual suddenly cries or falls; the individual may lose consciousness. On the other hand, generalized absence seizures or petit mal seizures look like a blank stare, beginning and ending abruptly, lasting only a few seconds.

JAN's [Accommodation Solutions: Executive Functioning Deficits](#) is a publication detailing accommodations for individuals with limitations related to executive functioning. These ideas may be helpful in determining accommodations.

#### **Plan of Action:**

In the event that a seizure does occur in the workplace, it is wise to be prepared. Preparation begins with a plan of action.

Can you remember back to elementary school? Think back to practice for a fire drill. Everyone in the entire school knew the plan and was prepared for the fire drill. Everyone knew who was in charge, what responsibilities each person had, how quickly to respond to an alarm, and how to exit the building. That type of preparedness made the fire drill work efficiently.

A plan of action is very similar to an elementary school fire drill. A plan of action is an emergency preparedness tool. It can be used to prepare for, or respond to, emergency

situations that arise when a person has a seizure on the job. A plan of action can be created with the employee and employer and can include information such as:

- emergency contact information
- visual or audible warning signs
- how/when to provide on-site medical assistance
- how/when to call 9-1-1
- how to provide environmental support
- who to designate as emergency responders
- who to go to for help
- how to educate co-workers about epilepsy

A properly implemented plan of action may reduce the confusion, panic, or fear that co-workers or customers experience if they see an employee having a seizure on the job. When the plan of action is “in action,” one designated person calls a spouse or emergency contact. One designated person watches over the employee. No one provides incorrect or unnecessary medical assistance (CPR, for example). No one overreacts to the emergency because everyone is prepared for it, can identify it, and respond appropriately to it.

A sample plan of action is provided. Please use it as guidance on how to write a plan of action. Employers are not required by the ADA to use the following form, nor are employees with epilepsy required by the ADA to use the form.

### [Sample Plan of Action](#)

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Warning Signs for Oncoming Seizure:

- Using his hand or arm, gently lead John to designated safe area.
- If necessary, help John into a seated or laying position.
- If necessary, loosen any restrictive clothing (such as a tie or scarf).
- During seizure (which lasts from 2 - 5 minutes), John will not need medical attention.
- When seizure subsides, offer John a cool cloth for his face or a cool drink.
- If John is disoriented, identify yourself and identify his location/surroundings.

Additional Comments:

How to Determine Whether a Person Has a Disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA).

## **Accommodating Employees with Epilepsy/Seizure Disorder**

People with epilepsy may develop some of the limitations discussed below, but seldom develop all of them. Also, the degree of limitation will vary among individuals. Be aware that not all people with epilepsy will need accommodations to perform their jobs and many others may only need a few accommodations. The following is only a sample of the possibilities available. Numerous other accommodation solutions may exist.

### **Questions to Consider:**

1. What limitations is the employee experiencing?
2. How do these limitations affect the employee and the employee's job performance?
3. What specific job tasks are problematic as a result of these limitations?
4. What accommodations are available to reduce or eliminate these problems? Are all possible resources being used to determine possible accommodations?
5. Once accommodations are in place, would it be useful to meet with the employee to evaluate the effectiveness of the accommodations and to determine whether additional accommodations are needed?
6. Do supervisory personnel and employees need training?

### **Accommodation Ideas:**

#### **Limitations**

##### Balancing

- Products
  - Aerial Lifts
  - Corner and Edge Cushions
  - Fall Protection

- Grab Bars
- Machine Guards and Shields
- Padded Edging
- Personal Safety and Fall Alert Devices
- Rolling Safety Ladders
- Strategies
  - Job Restructuring
  - Plan of Action
  - Reassignment
  - Worksite Redesign / Modified Workspace
  - Workplace Safety

#### Decreased Stamina/Fatigue

- Products
  - Anti-fatigue Matting
  - Ergonomic Equipment
  - Stand-lean Stools
  - Wearable Anti-fatigue Matting
- Services
  - Ergonomic Assessments
- Strategies
  - Flexible Schedule
  - Job Restructuring
  - Marginal Functions
  - Modified Break Schedule
  - Periodic Rest Breaks
  - Task Rotation
  - Task Separation
  - Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
  - Worksite Redesign / Modified Workspace

#### Executive Functioning Deficits

- Apps for Concentration
- Apps for Memory
- Calendars and Planners
- Checklists
- Color Coded System
- Cubicle Doors, Shields, and Shades
- Environmental Sound Machines / Tinnitus Maskers / White Noise Machines
- Extra Time
- Flexible Schedule
- Form Generating Software
- Full Spectrum or Natural Lighting Products
- Job Coaches
- Job Restructuring
- Marginal Functions
- Modified Break Schedule
- Noise Canceling Earbuds
- Noise Canceling Headsets
- On-site Mentoring
- Recorded Directives, Messages, Materials
- Reminders
- Sound Absorption and Sound Proof Panels
- Speech Recognition Software
- Sun Boxes and Lights
- Sun Simulating Desk Lamps
- Timers and Watches
- Written Instructions

#### Managing Time

- Products
  - Apps for Organization/ Time Management
  - Electronic Organizers

- Fitness Trackers
- PDAs, Notetakers, and Laptops
- Smart Watches
- Timers and Watches
- Calendars and Planners
- Services
  - Job Coaches
- Strategies
  - Additional Training Time / Training Refreshers
  - Checklists
  - Color Coded System
  - Color-coded Manuals, Outlines, and Maps
  - Extra Time
  - Recorded Directives, Messages, Materials
  - Reminders
  - Supervisory Methods
  - Support Person
  - Task Flow Chart
  - Task Separation
  - Verbal Cues
  - Written Instructions
  - Written Forms and Prompts

### Memory Loss

- Products
  - Apps for Memory
  - Break Reminder Software
  - Electronic Organizers
  - Form Generating Software
  - Labels/Bulletin Board
  - Medication Reminders
  - Memory Software

- Notepad or White Board
- On-Screen "Ruler" / Strip
- Timers and Watches
- Calendars and Planners
- Strategies
  - Additional Training Time / Training Refreshers
  - Color Coded System
  - Color-coded Manuals, Outlines, and Maps
  - Extra Time
  - Recorded Directives, Messages, Materials
  - Reminders
  - Supervisory Methods
  - Support Person
  - Task Flow Chart
  - Task Separation
  - Verbal Cues
  - Voice Recorders
  - Written Forms and Prompts
  - Written Instructions

#### Photosensitivity

- Alternative Lighting
- Anti-Glare Filters for Fluorescent Lights
- Anti-Glare/Radiation Filters for Computer Screens
- Blue Light Filters
- Cubicle Doors, Shields, and Shades
- Fluorescent Light Tube Covers
- Full Spectrum or Natural Lighting Products
- LED Lighting
- LED Light Filters
- Light Filtering Glasses
- Lighting Gel Filters

- Non-Fluorescent Lighting
- Sun/UV Protective Clothing
- Vehicle Window Tinting and Shades

#### Stress Intolerance

- Products
  - Apps for Anxiety and Stress
  - Environmental Sound Machines / Tinnitus Maskers / White Noise Machines
  - Fitness Trackers
  - Simulated Skylights and Windows
  - Sun Boxes and Lights
  - Sun Simulating Desk Lamps
- Services
  - Counseling/Therapy
  - Employee Assistance Program
- Strategies
  - Behavior Modification Techniques
  - Communicate Another Way
  - Complying with Behavior and Conduct Rules
  - Flexible Schedule
  - Instant Messaging and Texting Solutions for Businesses
  - Job Restructuring
  - Marginal Functions
  - Modified Break Schedule
  - On-site Mentoring
  - One-on-One Communication
  - Policy Modification
  - Positive Feedback
  - Supervisory Feedback
  - Supervisory Methods

- Support Animal
- Support Person
- Telepresence
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely

#### Unable to Work Alone

- Products
  - Alerting Devices
- Strategies
  - Disability Awareness/Etiquette Training
  - Flexible Schedule
  - Job Restructuring
  - Plan of Action
  - Supervisory Methods
  - Support Animal
  - Support Person

### **Work-Related Functions**

#### Policies

- Additional Training Time / Training Refreshers
- Aide/Assistant/Attendant
- Environmental Sound Machines / Tinnitus Maskers / White Noise Machines
- Flexible Schedule
- Marginal Functions
- Modified Break Schedule
- Periodic Rest Breaks
- Physical/Social Distancing Signage
- Policy Modification
- Reassignment
- Service Animal
- Sleep Alerting Devices

- Strobe Lights
- Supervisory Methods
- Support Animal
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
- Touchless Faucets

#### Safety Standards

- Additional Training Time / Training Refreshers
- Aerial Lifts
- Alerting Devices
- Body Protection
- Break Reminder Software
- Cut and Puncture Resistant Gloves and Sleeves
- Designated Responders
- Fall Protection
- High Visibility Floor Tape and Paint
- Machine Guards and Shields
- Rolling Safety Ladders
- Seat Belts & Seat Belt Extenders
- Stair Tread/Textured Tape
- Personal Safety and Fall Alert Devices
- Workplace Safety

## Situations and Solutions:

The following situations and solutions are real-life examples of accommodations that were made by JAN customers. Because accommodations are made on a case-by-case basis, these examples may not be effective for every workplace but give you an idea about the types of accommodations that are possible.

**A student with epilepsy used hedge-cutters and other landscaping tools in a training program.**

For safety, JAN suggested steel-toed shoes, shin guards, and hand protection.

**A welder with epilepsy wanted to make his work area safe when he had a seizure.**

JAN suggested a welder's helmet with additional padding and using a safety switch on his welding machines.

**An administrator with epilepsy needed an emergency communication system to inform someone that she had a seizure.**

JAN suggested using a two way radio.

**An engineer with epilepsy had difficulty managing multiple tasks.**

JAN suggested color-coding on-going projects, using wall charts to track progress, and prioritizing tasks for the employee.

**Charmaine is an employee with epilepsy who needs to disclose her disability and ask for an accommodation of a flexible schedule while she adjusts to new medication.**

She is having difficulty waking and has been late three days in a row. She is wary of disclosing her medical condition, but doesn't want to get into disciplinary action. Charmaine decides to disclose and provides medical documentation. Since her work doesn't depend on or affect others, the employer found no hardship to flex her daily schedule as long as she gets her time in between the core business hours of 8:00 am to 6:00 pm.

**An educational consultant with epilepsy had driving restrictions.**

JAN suggested allowing another team member to drive to site-visit locations and telework whereby she could communicate via e-mail and submit paperwork electronically.

## Products

There are numerous products that can be used to accommodate people with limitations. JAN's Searchable Online Accommodation Resource at <https://AskJAN.org/soar> is designed to let users explore various

accommodation options. Many product vendor lists are accessible through this system; however, JAN provides these lists and many more that are not available on the Web site upon request. Contact JAN directly if you have specific accommodation situations, are looking for products, need vendor information, or are seeking a referral.

## Resources

### **Job Accommodation Network**

West Virginia University  
PO Box 6080  
Morgantown, WV 26506-6080  
Toll Free: (800) 526-7234  
TTY: (304) 293-7186  
Fax: (304) 293-5407  
[jan@askjan.org](mailto:jan@askjan.org)  
<https://askjan.org>

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is a free consulting service that provides information about job accommodations, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the employability of people with disabilities.

### **Office of Disability Employment Policy**

200 Constitution Avenue,  
NW, Room S-1303  
Washington, DC 20210  
Toll Free: (866) 633-7365  
[odep@dol.gov](mailto:odep@dol.gov)  
<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep>

The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) is an agency within the U.S. Department of Labor. ODEP provides national leadership to increase employment opportunities for adults and youth with disabilities while striving to eliminate barriers to employment.

### **American Epilepsy Society**

135 South LaSalle Street  
Suite 2850  
Chicago, IL 60603  
Direct: (312) 883-3800  
<http://www.aesnet.org>

- The American Epilepsy Society is one of the oldest neurological professional organizations in this country. The Society seeks to promote interdisciplinary communications, scientific investigation and exchange of clinical information about epilepsy

The American Epilepsy Society is one of the oldest neurological professional organizations in this country. The Society seeks to promote interdisciplinary communications, scientific investigation and exchange of clinical information about epilepsy. - See more at:

[https://www.aesnet.org/about\\_aes#sthash.VwiVR6OS.dpuf](https://www.aesnet.org/about_aes#sthash.VwiVR6OS.dpuf)

The American Epilepsy Society is one of the oldest neurological professional organizations in this country. The Society seeks to promote interdisciplinary communications, scientific investigation and exchange of clinical information about epilepsy

### **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

1600 Clifton Rd  
Atlanta, GA 30333  
Toll Free: (800) 232-4636  
<https://www.cdc.gov/>

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are dedicated to protecting the health and safety of people - at home and abroad, providing credible information to enhance health decisions, and promoting health through strong partnerships.

### **Charlie Foundation for Ketogenic Therapies**

515 Ocean Ave.  
#602N  
Santa Monica, CA 90402  
Direct: (310) 393-2347  
<http://www.charlifoundation.org/>

The Charlie Foundation for Ketogenic Therapies was founded in 1994 to provide information about diet therapies for people with epilepsy, other neurological disorders and tumorous cancers.

**Citizens United for Research in Epilepsy (CURE)**

430 W. Erie  
Suite 210  
Chicago, IL 60654  
Direct: (312) 255-1801  
[info@cureepilepsy.org](mailto:info@cureepilepsy.org)  
<http://www.cureepilepsy.org/home.asp>

CURE's mission is to cure epilepsy, transforming and saving millions of lives. We identify and fund cutting-edge research, challenging scientists worldwide to collaborate and innovate in pursuit of this goal. Our commitment is unrelenting.

**Doose Syndrome Epilepsy Alliance**

PO Box 15224  
Colorado Springs, CO 80935-5224  
[info@doosesyndrome.org](mailto:info@doosesyndrome.org)  
<http://doosesyndrome.org/>

**Dravet Syndrome Foundation, Inc.**

PO Box 16536  
West Haven, CT 06516  
Direct: (203) 392-1950  
Fax: (203) 907-1940  
[info@dravetfoundation.org](mailto:info@dravetfoundation.org)  
<http://www.dravetfoundation.org>

The mission of Dravet Syndrome Foundation (DSF) is to aggressively raise research funds for Dravet syndrome and related epilepsies; to increase awareness of these catastrophic conditions; and to provide support to affected individuals and families.

**Epilepsy Foundation**  
8301 Professional Place  
Suite 200  
Landover, MD 20785-2353  
Toll Free: (800) 332-1000  
[ContactUs@efa.org](mailto:ContactUs@efa.org)  
<http://www.epilepsy.com/>

The nation's leading source of information about seizure disorders. The Foundation offers a toll-free information and referral service, legal advocacy, a national epilepsy library, and a catalog of epilepsy-related materials including books, videos, and pamphlets.

**International League Against Epilepsy**  
342 North Main Street  
West Hartford, CT 06117-2507  
Toll Free: (860) 586-7547  
Fax: (860) 586-7550  
[dflower@ilae.org](mailto:dflower@ilae.org)  
<https://www.epilepsydiagnosis.org/>

ILAE's mission is to ensure that health professionals, patients and their care providers, governments, and the public world-wide have the educational and research resources that are essential in understanding, diagnosing and treating persons with epilepsy.

**LGS Foundation**  
80 Orville Dr  
Suite 100  
Bohemia, NY 11716  
Toll Free: (718) 374-3800  
[info@lgsfoundation.org](mailto:info@lgsfoundation.org)  
<http://www.lgsfoundation.org/>

The LGS Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing information about Lennox-Gastaut Syndrome while raising funds for research, services and support for individuals living with LGS and their families.

**Mayo Clinic**

13400 E. Shea Blvd.  
Scottsdale, AZ 85259  
Direct: (480) 301-8000  
<http://www.mayoclinic.org/>

The Mayo Clinic's mission to inspire hope and contribute to health and well-being by providing the best care to every patient through integrated clinical practice, education and research.

**MedlinePlus**

8600 Rockville Pike  
Bethesda, MD 20894  
[custserv@nlm.nih.gov](mailto:custserv@nlm.nih.gov)  
<https://medlineplus.gov>

MedlinePlus is the National Institutes of Health's Web site for patients and their families and friends. Produced by the National Library of Medicine, the world's largest medical library, it brings you information about diseases, conditions, and wellness issues in language you can understand. MedlinePlus offers reliable, up-to-date health information, anytime, anywhere, for free.

**National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke**

P.O. Box 5801  
Bethesda, MD 20824  
Toll Free: (800) 352-9424  
Direct: (301) 496-5751  
<http://www.ninds.nih.gov>

The NINDS, an agency of the U.S. Federal Government and a component of the National Institutes of Health and the U.S. Public Health Service, is a lead agency for the congressionally designated Decade of the Brain, and the leading supporter of biomedical research on disorders of the brain and nervous system.

**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**

Toll Free: (844) 698-2311

<http://www.va.gov/>

The Agency is responsible for providing employment, training, educational and reemployment rights information and assistance to veterans, and other military personnel who are preparing to transition from the military. Also provide hearing aids. All World War I veterans are eligible to receive free hearing aids. Other veterans can receive free hearing aids if their hearing loss is at least 50% service-related.

**World Health Organization**

525 Twenty-third Street

N.W.

Washington, DC 20037

Direct: (202) 974-3000

Fax: (202) 974-3663

<http://www.who.int/en/>

We are the directing and coordinating authority on international health within the United Nations' system.

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