

JAN

Job Accommodation Network

Practical Solutions • Workplace Success

Accommodation and Compliance Series

Accommodation and Compliance Series: Albinism

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Preface

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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 Albinism

Albinism refers to a group of rare disorders that are inherited genetically and result in a lack or complete loss of pigment in the skin, hair, and irises of the eyes. The lack of pigment, specifically melanin, causes the skin to be lighter in color and more vulnerable to ultraviolet (UV) rays. Albinism can also cause a variety of visual impairments including involuntary back-and-forth movements of the eyes (nystagmus), inability to focus both eyes on a single point (strabismus), extreme near/farsightedness, and sensitivity to light, or photophobia. The severity of symptoms resulting from albinism varies and not all individuals with albinism will need accommodations.

Albinism and the Americans with Disabilities Act

The ADA does not contain a definitive list of medical conditions that constitute disabilities. Instead, the ADA defines a person with a disability as someone who (1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more "major life activities," (2) has a record of such an impairment, or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment. For more information about how to determine whether a person has a disability under the ADA, see [How to Determine Whether a Person Has a Disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act \(ADAAA\)](#).

Accommodating Employees with Albinism

People with albinism 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 albinism 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

Low Vision

- Magnification
 - External Computer Screen Magnification
 - Head-mounted Magnifiers
 - Magnification (Hand or Stand)
 - Portable Video/Electronic Magnifiers
 - Screen Magnification and Screen Reading Combined
 - Screen Magnification Software
- Other
 - Apps for Individuals with Vision Impairment
 - Enlarged Keyboard Tops and Labels

- Lighted Reading Glasses
- Low Vision Office Supplies
- Phone
 - Accessible Mobile Phones
 - Accessible Telephones
 - Large Button Phones
 - Large Visual Display for Telephone

Photosensitivity

- Alternative Lighting
- Anti-Glare Filters for Fluorescent Lights
- Cubicle Doors, Shields, and Shades
- Fluorescent Light Tube Covers
- Full Spectrum or Natural Lighting Products
- LED Light Filters
- Light Filtering Glasses
- Lighting Gel Filters
- Sun/UV Protective Clothing
- Vehicle Window Tinting and Shades

Work-Related Functions

Access Information

- Magnification
 - External Computer Screen Magnification
 - Magnification (Hand or Stand)
 - Screen Magnification Software
- Phone
 - Accessible Mobile Phones
 - Accessible Telephones
 - Large Button Phones
 - Large Visual Display for Telephone

Light

- Alternative Lighting
- Anti-Glare Filters for Fluorescent Lights
- Flexible Schedule
- Fluorescent Light Tube Covers
- Full Spectrum or Natural Lighting Products
- LED Light Filters
- Lighting Gel Filters
- Modified Lighting
- Non-Fluorescent Lighting
- Personal Visors
- Simulated Skylights and Windows
- Sun/UV Protective Clothing
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
- Transparent Window Shades
- UV Protection Shelters
- Vehicle Window Tinting and Shades

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.

An employee with albinism working in a grounds keeping position requested periodic rest breaks to allow for applying sunscreen to protect from sunburns.

Due to the physical exertion required for the job, the employee's sweating makes the sunscreen ineffective prior to regularly scheduled break times. The employer provided flexibility in the employee's schedule to allow for these unpaid breaks while also extending the employee's end time so that the amount of productive work time remains consistent.

An applicant for a server position at a restaurant disclosed that he has albinism.

He requested to be permitted to deviate from the dress code to wear long sleeve shirts at work due to the ease of which the applicant gets sunburns. The employer agreed that the long sleeves would be acceptable so long as they followed similar color schemes as the normal dress code.

An employee who has albinism requested accommodations because of difficulty in reading text on a computer screen.

The employer installed screen magnification software on the employee's workstation computer to increase the size of the on screen font.

An employee working as a law office clerk was having trouble reading the text on the memos she has being given by the lawyers in her office.

She disclosed that she had low vision due to albinism and requested that the memos be provided in large print. The employer made a policy that memos must be written in a minimum of 18 point font and also provided a stand up magnifier to assist in reading hand-written items.

An employee who works converting paper documents into a digital database was having trouble reading the paper documents.

A co-worker mentioned this to his supervisor and his supervisor discussed how an accommodation may be able to assist him. The employee stated that because of his albinism he cannot read the smaller print. The employer provided a portable reader and a headset which would take a picture of the document and then read the text from that picture aloud through the headset.

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
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TTY: (304) 293-7186
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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
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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.

National Organization for Albinism and Hypopigmentation (NOAH)

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NOAH is a 501(c)3 nonprofit that is federally tax exempt, incorporated in the state of Pennsylvania. We are a volunteer organization for persons and families involved with the condition of albinism. NOAH does not diagnose, treat, or provide genetic counseling. NOAH is involved in self-help, while trying to promote research and education.

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