

# JAN

Job Accommodation Network

Practical Solutions • Workplace Success

## Accommodation and Compliance Series

# Accommodation and Compliance Series: Employees with Spina Bifida

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Funded by a contract with the Office of Disability  
Employment Policy, U.S. Department of Labor

## Preface

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is funded by a contract with the Office of Disability Employment Policy, U.S. Department of Labor. JAN makes documents available with the understanding that the information be used solely for educational purposes. The information is not intended to be legal or medical advice. If legal or medical advice is needed, appropriate legal or medical services should be contacted.

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 <http://askjan.org/soar>.

### **Information about Spina Bifida**

Spina bifida is the most frequently occurring permanent birth defect. It affects approximately one out of every 1,000 newborns in the United States. It results from the failure of the spine to close properly during the first month of pregnancy. In severe cases, the spinal cord protrudes through the back and may be covered by skin or a thin membrane.

### **Spina Bifida and the Americans with Disabilities Act**

The ADA does not contain a list of medical conditions that constitute disabilities. Instead, the ADA has a general definition of disability that each person must meet. A person has a disability if he/she has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having 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 Spina Bifida**

People with spina bifida 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 who are aging 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. Has the employee been consulted regarding possible accommodations?
6. 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?
7. Do supervisory personnel and employees need training?

### **Accommodation Ideas:**

#### **Limitations**

##### Lifting

- Agriculture/Farm
  - Animal Lift Tables
  - Carts
  - Compact Mobile Cranes
- Industrial
  - Aerial Lifts
  - Ball Transfer Tables
  - Battery Powered Lift Tables
  - Drum Handling
  - Engine Lifts and Lift Plates
  - Lift Gates
  - Lift Tables
  - Rolling Safety Ladders

- Stairclimbing Handtrucks
- Truck Mounted Cranes
- Vacuum Lifts
- Vehicle Lifts and Manipulators
- Winches and Chain Hoists
- Work Platforms
- Office or Retail Goods
  - Carts
  - Compact Material Handling
  - Ergonomic Equipment
  - Height Adjustable Table Legs
  - Low Task Chair
  - Stairclimbing Handtrucks
- Other
  - Drywall and Wallboard Lifts
  - Ergonomic Equipment
  - Independent Living Aids
  - Job Restructuring
  - Lifters and Carriers for Mobility Aids
  - Lifting Aids
  - Manhole Cover Lifts
  - Periodic Rest Breaks
  - Power Lift IV Stands
  - Proper Lifting Techniques
- People
  - Accessible Baby Changing Stations
  - Adjustable Exam Tables
  - Adult Changing Tables
  - Bath Chairs
  - Evacuation Devices
  - Large-Rated Wheelchair Lifts

- Patient Lifts (General)

#### Toileting/Grooming Issue

- Accessible Toilets and Toilet Seats
- Aide/Assistant/Attendant
- Flexible Schedule
- Grab Bars - Toilet Hinged Arm Support
- Grooming and Dressing Aids
- Independent Living Aids
- Modified Break Schedule
- Swing Away Grab Bars
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
- Toileting Aids
- Transfer Aids
- Worksite Redesign / Modified Workspace

#### Walking

- Aide/Assistant/Attendant
- All-Terrain Scooters
- All-Terrain Wheelchairs
- Anti-fatigue Matting
- Foldable / Transport Wheelchairs
- Large-Rated Scooters
- Large-Rated Wheelchairs
- Personal Transportation and Mobility Products
- Reclining Wheelchairs
- Rollators and Rolling Walkers
- Scooters
- Scooters for Small Stature
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
- Walkers
- Walkers for Tall Individuals

- Walkers with Seats
- Wearable Anti-fatigue Matting
- Wheelchairs
- Wheelchairs for Small Stature
- Worksite Redesign / Modified Workspace

## **Work-Related Functions**

### Work Site Access

- Accessible Toilets and Toilet Seats
- Adjustable Workstations for Industrial Settings
- Adjustable Workstations for Office Settings
- Alternative Locks
- Anti-fatigue Matting
- Braille and/or ADA Signage
- Building Accessibility Products
- Door Knob Grips and Handles
- Flexible Schedule
- Portable Ramps
- Ramps
- Scooters
- Service Animal
- Support Animal
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
- Wearable Anti-fatigue Matting
- Wheelchair Lifts
- Wheelchairs
- Worksite Redesign / Modified Workspace

## Situations and Solutions:

### **An applicant lets his prospective employer know that he uses public transportation to get around as he cannot drive.**

The individual discloses that he has spina bifida. The employer agrees to allow the individual to have flexibility in his schedule if he is hired so that the individual can work around the public transportation schedule.

### **An applicant for a cashier position has spina bifida and uses a wheelchair for mobility.**

The employer agrees to make adjustments to one of the cashier stations to be wheelchair accessible should the individual be hired for the position.

### **An employee with spina bifida has been having problems when needing to perform extensive keyboarding tasks at work.**

The employer allowed the individual to use speech recognition software to minimize the amount of keyboarding needed to perform these job functions.

### **An employee with spina bifida had difficulty accessing the employer's parking lot.**

Because the employee's office was on the tenth floor, the employer agreed to provide a reserved parking space that was as close to the building as possible.

### **An applicant who uses a walker states that she would have trouble using stairs due to limitations from spina bifida.**

The individual's workstation would normally be located on the third floor. The employer agrees to place the individual's workstation on the first floor if she is hired as an accommodation.

## Products

There are numerous products that can be used to accommodate people with limitations. JAN's Searchable Online Accommodation Resource at <http://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  
<http://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  
<http://dol.gov/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 Physical Therapy Association**

<http://www.moveforwardpt.com/Default.aspx>

MoveForwardPT.com is the official consumer information website of the American Physical Therapy Association.

**American Pregnancy Association**

425 Greenway Drive  
Suite 440  
Irving, TX 75038  
Toll Free: (800) 672-2296  
info@americanpregnancy.org  
<http://americanpregnancy.org/>

The American Pregnancy Association is a national health organization committed to promoting reproductive and pregnancy wellness through education, support, advocacy, and community awareness.

**Center for Parent Information and Resources**

35 Halsey St.  
Fourth Floor  
Newark, NJ 07102  
malizo@spannj.org  
<http://www.parentcenterhub.org/>

The Center for Parent Information and Resources (CPIR) serves as a central resource of information and products to the community of Parent Training Information (PTI) Centers and the Community Parent Resource Centers (CPRCs), so that they can focus their efforts on serving families of children with disabilities.

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

1600 Clifton Rd  
Atlanta, GA 30333  
Toll Free: (800) 232-4636  
<http://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.

**Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation**

636 Morris Turnpike

Suite 3A

Short Hills, NJ 07078

Toll Free: (800) 225-0292

Direct: (973) 379-2690

TeamReeve@ChristopherReeve.org

[http://www.christopherreeve.org/site/c.ddJFKRNoFiG/b.4048063/k.67BA/The\\_Christopher\\_amp\\_Dana\\_Reeve\\_Foundation\\_\\_Paralysis\\_amp\\_Spinal\\_Cord\\_Injury.htm](http://www.christopherreeve.org/site/c.ddJFKRNoFiG/b.4048063/k.67BA/The_Christopher_amp_Dana_Reeve_Foundation__Paralysis_amp_Spinal_Cord_Injury.htm)

The Reeve Foundation is dedicated to curing spinal cord injury by funding innovative research, and improving the quality of life for people living with paralysis through grants, information and advocacy.

**Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development**

31 Center Drive

Building 31, Room 2A32

Bethesda, MD 20892-2425

Toll Free: (800) 370-2943

Fax: (866) 760-5947

NICHDInformationResourceCenter@mail.nih.gov

<http://www.nichd.nih.gov/Pages/index.aspx>

The mission of the NICHD is to ensure that every person is born healthy and wanted, that women suffer no harmful effects from reproductive processes, and that all children have the chance to achieve their full potential for healthy and productive lives, free from disease or disability, and to ensure the health, productivity, independence, and well-being of all people through optimal rehabilitation.

**Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development**

P.O. Box 3006  
Rockville, MD 20847  
Toll Free: (800) 370-2943  
Fax: (866) 760-5947  
NICHDInformationResourceCenter@mail.nih.gov  
<http://www.nichd.nih.gov/Pages/index.aspx>

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**Fetal Health Foundation**

9766 South Holland St.  
Littleton, CO 80127  
Toll Free: (877) 789-4673  
[info@fetalhealthfoundation.org](mailto:info@fetalhealthfoundation.org)  
<http://www.fetalhealthfoundation.org/>

Fetal Health Foundation supports families receiving a fetal syndrome diagnosis, funds life-saving research, increases fetal syndrome awareness, and shares leading medical information on fetal syndromes.

**Genetic and Rare Diseases Information Center (GARD)**

P.O. Box 8126  
Gaithersburg, MD 20898-8126  
Toll Free: (888) 205-2311  
Fax: (301) 251-4911  
<https://rarediseases.info.nih.gov/>

The Genetic and Rare Diseases (GARD) Information Center is a program of the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS) and funded by two parts of the National Institutes of Health (NIH): NCATS and the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI). GARD provides the public with access to current, reliable,

and easy to understand information about rare or genetic diseases in English or Spanish.

**International Federation for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus**

Cellebroersstraat 16/Rue des Alexiens 16  
B-1000 Brussels  
info@ifglobal.org  
<http://www.ifglobal.org/en/>

The mission of the International Federation for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus is to reduce the incidence of spina bifida and hydrocephalus by primary prevention and to improve the quality of life of people with SBH and their families through human rights education, political advocacy, research and community building.

**March of Dimes Foundation**

1275 Mamaroneck Avenue  
White Plains , NY 10605  
<http://www.marchofdimes.org/>

The mission of the March of Dimes is to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality.

**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  
<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/>

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.

Created by the U.S. National Library of Medicine

**National Center for Biotechnology Information**

8600 Rockville Pike  
Bethesda, MD 20894  
pubmedcentral@ncbi.nlm.nih.gov  
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/>

MISSION: IMS brings together an international community of health care professionals, researchers, educators, and others to improve care and transform delivery of treatment to those suffering from soft tissue pain through the promotion and exchange of globally recognized research, education, and innovation in patient care.

**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.

**National Organization for Rare Disorders**

55 Kenosia Avenue  
Danbury, CT 06813-1968  
Toll Free: (800) 999-6673  
Direct: (203) 744-0100  
Fax: (203) 263-9938  
<http://www.rarediseases.org>

NORD is a unique federation of voluntary health organizations dedicated to helping people with rare "orphan" diseases and assisting the organizations that serve them. NORD is committed to the identification, treatment, and cure of rare disorders through programs of education, advocacy, research, and service.

**Spina Bifida Association**

1600 Wilson Blvd  
Suite 800  
Arlington, VA 22209  
Toll Free: (800) 621-3141  
Direct: (202) 944-3285  
Fax: (202) 944-3295  
[sbaa@sbaa.org](mailto:sbaa@sbaa.org)  
<http://www.spinabifidaassociation.org>

The Spina Bifida Association (SBA) serves adults and children who live with the challenges of Spina Bifida. Since 1973, SBA has been the only national voluntary health agency solely dedicated to enhancing the lives of those with Spina Bifida and those whose lives are touched by this challenging birth defect. Its tools are education, advocacy, research, and service.

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