

# JAN

Job Accommodation Network

Practical Solutions • Workplace Success

## Accommodation and Compliance Series

# Accommodation and Compliance Series: Employees with Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy (RSD)/Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS)

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**ODEP**  
Office of Disability  
Employment Policy

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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 Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy (RSD)**

Complex regional pain syndrome (CRPS) is a condition described as a chronic pain occurring as a result of trauma to a soft tissue or bone (Type I) or nerve injury (Type II). Type I CRPS is also called reflex sympathetic dystrophy (RSD) and causalgia. A progressive disease of the nervous system, symptoms of pain and burning can affect one, two, three, or all four limbs. In extreme cases other or all parts of the body may be affected. Complications to the condition include depression, anxiety, and atrophy.

### **Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy (RSD) 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 Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy (RSD)**

People with limitations from complex regional pain syndrome or reflex sympathetic dystrophy 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**

##### Operating Foot Control

- Hand Controls
- Left-Foot Gas Pedal

##### Pain

- Industrial
  - Adjustable Workstations for Industrial Settings
  - Anti-fatigue Matting
  - Anti-vibration Gloves

- Anti-vibration Seats
- Anti-vibration Tool Wraps
- Carts
- Compact Material Handling
- Wearable Anti-fatigue Matting
- Office
  - Adjustable Workstations for Office Settings
  - Alternative Keyboards
  - Alternative Mice
  - Chairs with Head Support
  - Ergonomic and Adjustable Office Chairs
  - Ergonomic Assessments
  - Ergonomic Equipment
  - Forearm Supports
  - Gooseneck and Other Telephone Holders
  - Scribe/Notetaker
  - Speech Recognition Software
  - Supine Workstations
  - Writing Aids
- Other
  - Aide/Assistant/Attendant
  - Automatic Door Openers
  - Flexible Schedule
  - Modified Break Schedule
  - Scooters
  - Service Animal
  - Stand-lean Stools
  - Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
  - Worksite Redesign / Modified Workspace
  - Workstation Space Heaters

Standing

- Adjustable Workstations for Industrial Settings
- Adjustable Workstations for Office Settings
- Anti-fatigue Matting
- Assist Lift Cushions
- Elevating Lift and Office Chairs
- Grab Bars
- Periodic Rest Breaks
- Scooters
- Stand Aids
- Stand-lean Stools
- Stand-up Wheelchairs

#### Stress Intolerance

- Apps for Anxiety and Stress
- Behavior Modification Techniques
- Counseling/Therapy
- Environmental Sound Machines / Tinnitus Maskers / White Noise Machines
- Flexible Schedule
- Job Restructuring
- Marginal Functions
- Modified Break Schedule
- Supervisory Methods
- Support Animal
- Support Person

#### Use of One Hand/Arm

- Alternative Input Devices
- Alternative Keyboards
- Alternative Mice
- Articulating Keyboard Trays
- Ergonomic Equipment
- Expanded Keyboards

- Eye Controlled Alternative Computer Input Devices
- Forearm Supports
- Keyguards
- Left Hand-Dominant Keyboards
- Miniature Keyboards
- On-Screen Keyboards
- One-Handed Keyboard Software
- Scribe/Notetaker
- Speech Recognition Software
- Ten Keypads
- Tongue Touch Keyboards/Mice
- Typing / Keyboarding Aids

#### 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**

### Stress

- Apps for Anxiety and Stress
- Behavior Modification Techniques
- Counseling/Therapy
- Flexible Schedule
- Job Restructuring
- Marginal Functions
- Modified Break Schedule
- Monitor Mirrors
- On-site Mentoring
- Service Animal
- Simulated Skylights and Windows
- Supervisory Methods
- Support Animal
- Support Person
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
- Uninterrupted Work Time



## **Situations and Solutions:**

**A college coordinator had reflex sympathetic dystrophy, which made her legs swell.**

The employee had to elevate her legs periodically throughout the day. The employer purchased a specialized reclining office chair with footrest. The employee was able to continue working at full production with the new chair and a laptop.

**A meter reader had reflex sympathetic dystrophy causing numbness in his feet.**

The condition flared in the early morning, so the employee requested a later start time as a reasonable accommodation. The employer modified his schedule which enabled the employee to work when he was feeling his best, but also permitted the job to be performed.

**A graphic artist experienced depression which stemmed from reflex sympathetic dystrophy.**

He was having difficulty keeping up with the production standards. The employer provided him with an alerting timer which enabled the employee to work on one task until the alarm went off then he could change tasks. This enabled the employee to maintain production requirements.

**A social worker with reflex sympathetic dystrophy had limited use of one hand.**

The employee was having a hard time keeping up with case documentation requirements. The employer explored alternative input devices on the JAN website and provided the employee with a one handed keyboard and speech recognition software.

**An associate director of a nonprofit used a wheelchair due to reflex sympathetic dystrophy.**

They had trouble with toileting needs so they requested an accommodation which included additional grab bars be installed and the door to be equipped with an automatic door assist. The employer installed these products with the aid of the state vocational rehabilitation agency.

## **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 Chronic Pain Association**

P.O. Box 850  
Rocklin, CA 95677-0850  
Toll Free: (800) 533-3231  
Fax: (916) 632-3208  
ACPA@theacpa.org  
<http://www.theacpa.org>

The purpose of the American Chronic Pain Association is to facilitate peer support and education for individuals with chronic pain and their families so that these individuals may live more fully in spite of their pain.

**Arthritis Foundation**

1330 W. Peachtree Street  
Suite 100  
Atlanta, GA 30309  
Direct: (404) 872-7100  
<http://www.arthritis.org>

The Arthritis Foundation is committed to raising awareness and reducing the unacceptable impact of arthritis, a disease which must be taken as seriously as other chronic diseases because of its devastating consequences. The Arthritis Foundation is leading the way to conquer the nation's leading cause of disability through increased education, outreach, research, advocacy and other vital programs and services.

**Institute for Chronic Pain**

PO Box 193  
Stillwater, MN 55082  
<http://www.instituteforchronicpain.org/>

The Institute for Chronic Pain is an educational and public policy think tank whose mission is to change the culture of how chronic pain is treated. We engage in research, development, and promotion of scientifically accurate information related to the field of chronic pain management. We do so by bringing together thought leaders from around the world to provide academic-quality information that is approachable to all stakeholders in the field, particularly, patients, their families, and society, more generally. The staff and fellows of the Institute are specialists in chronic pain management as well as healthcare policy and management.

**International Research Foundation for RSD/CRPS**

1910 East Busch Boulevard  
Tampa, FL 33612  
Direct: (813) 907-2312  
mdavis@rsdfoundation.org  
<http://www.rsdfoundation.org/>

The International Research Foundation for RSD / CRPS is a not-for-profit organization (501c3) dedicated to education and research on Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy and Complex Regional Pain Syndrome. The primary mission of the Foundation is to establish an international research network which will help educate medical professionals and support research worldwide.

**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.

**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 Fibromyalgia & Chronic Pain Association**

31 Federal Avenue  
Logan, UT 84321  
Toll Free: (801) 200-3627  
info@fmcpcaware.org  
<http://www.fmcpcaware.org/>

The National Fibromyalgia & Chronic Pain Association (NFMCPA) is a 501(c)3 not for profit organization. We support people with chronic pain illnesses and their families and friends by contributing to caring, professional, and community relationships. Through continuing education, networking with support groups and advocates, and affiliation with professional organizations, the members of the NFMCPA have a place to be informed, get involved, and recognize achievements.

**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.

### **Remedy's Health Communitites**

<http://www.healthcommunities.com>

Remedy Health Media is America's fastest growing health information and technology company. We are a leading provider of clinical resources and wellness tools that help millions of patients and caregivers live healthier, more fulfilled lives.

Our mission is to empower patients and caregivers with the information and applications needed to efficiently navigate the healthcare landscape and as a result, to permit better health outcomes through use of our products and services.

### **Thoracic Outlet Syndrome**

Ellijay, GA

Direct: (703) 347-9109

[doconline2@cox.net](mailto:doconline2@cox.net)

<http://www.tos-syndrome.com/>

The objectives of this Page are to facilitate the diagnosis of Thoracic Outlet Syndrome. To offer a definition and method of diagnosis, as well as, the relationship of Thoracic Outlet Syndrome to chest pain and Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy (Complex Regional Pain Syndrome).

This document was developed by the Job Accommodation Network, funded by a contract from the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy (#1605DC-17-C-0038). The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Department of Labor. Nor does mention of tradenames, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Department of Labor.