JAN
Job Accommodation Network
Practical Solutions • Workplace Success

Accommodation and Compliance Series

Accommodation and Compliance Series: Veterans and Service Members

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ODEP
Office of Disability Employment Policy

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

JAN'S Accommodation and Compliance Series

Introduction

JAN salutes our returning service members and veterans. JAN provides publications and resources as a way to share accommodation situations and solutions for veterans and service members in need. Veterans are a broad population spanning from those who served in World War II to recent veterans who were on active duty during the post-9/11 period known as Gulf War-era II. Although most veterans are men, women are a growing part of the veteran population.

These individuals work in various industries and bring unique skills to the workforce. It is imperative to consider providing job accommodations to enhance the productivity of these valuable workers. The topics are reflective of the more common injuries our returning service members and veterans receive.

For more information, see the content below:

- Amputations
- Anxiety
- Back Impairments
- Blindness
- Brain Injuries
- Burn Injuries
- Hearing Loss
- Mental Health Impairments
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

For additional resources by category, visit:

- Veterans: Advocacy and Social Services Resources
- Veterans: Business Resources
- Veterans: Conflict-Specific Resources
- Veterans: Employment and Training
- Veterans: Minority-Specific Resources
- Veterans: Resources by Branch/Specialization
- Veterans: Resources by Disability

- Veterans: Resources by State/Territory

Situations and Solutions:

Prior to entering the service, a veteran had been a heavy equipment mechanic.
However, one of his arms was amputated during his military service and he could no longer repair large, heavy equipment. He decided to try self-employment, specializing in small equipment repair. He purchased a multi-lift and overhead hoist to hold the equipment so he could access it.

A heating/cooling technician had a burn injury on his waist and chest from a service connected injury.
He had difficulty wearing the polyester uniform required by his employer. His employer had uniforms custom made for him out of cotton.

A veteran who recently returned to the workforce after spending several years overseas has Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), which causes difficulty with memory and mood regulation.
He was recently hired as a customer service representative. After disclosing his disability and requesting reasonable accommodations, his employer provided him with a cubicle close to an exit, with his back facing a wall. This helped to alleviate some of his stress, but he still had difficulty with memory and emotional outbursts. The employer obtained a job coach through the Department of Veterans Affairs to assist the employee with adjusting to his new position. The job coach worked with the employer and employee to develop a customized form for taking notes from customers and a system for organizing the employee's workspace. The job coach also suggested the employee e-mail his supervisor when he has questions so he will have responses in written form that he can refer to later if he forgets something. Finally, the job coach helped the employee incorporate breaks into his day to walk and do breathing exercises to help reduce the likelihood of emotional outbursts. After the job coach comes in twice a week for three weeks, the employee is able to incorporate the job coach's suggestions into his regular routine and perform his job duties without assistance.

A veteran with double, above-elbow amputations, works for a federal agency and must take a laptop and paperwork to and from work each day
Her employer provided a personal assistant to carry the laptop and paperwork to and from the employee’s car.

A veteran who is now an office employee has PTSD and anxiety.
He is easily frightened when being approached unsuspectingly. This employee works in a structured cubicle environment facing his computer and cubicle walls, with his back to the cubicle entrance. He wants to be alerted when a coworker or supervisor walks into the cubicle behind him. JAN suggested using a monitor-mounted mirror, so he could see the entrance behind him. JAN also suggested placing a sensor mat at the entrance of the cubicle, which will make an audible alert when someone steps on it.

A veteran who worked as a postal carrier had a service connected spinal injury without paralysis.
Recently he began to experience numbness in his legs when exposed to cold weather, but did not want to transfer to an indoor job because he would lose his seniority. He bid on and was reassigned to a rural postal carrier job in which he could remain in his truck for most deliveries.

A veteran working as a mail room clerk had hearing loss from an explosion.
He had to periodically answer the phone in the mailroom, but was having difficulty hearing callers. He asked to be excused from answering the phones, but sometimes he was the only one in the mailroom. The employer provided an amplified phone instead.

A veteran had a service connected back injury that was worsening with age.
He worked as a manager in a large retail store and was having problems walking and standing on the concrete floors. His employer purchased Ergomates for his shoes.

A veteran with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) was working for state government on a team project.
The employer decided to move the team's office to the basement of a building. Once the move occurred, the veteran realized that the noises in the basement were triggering memories of explosions and causing flare ups of his PTSD. The employer did not want to move the entire team again but was able to find an office on the first floor of the same building for the veteran. The rest of the team remained in the basement, but team meetings were held upstairs.

A veteran with a service connected knee injury developed arthritis in the same knee and was having difficulty working at a kneeling height in his construction job.
His employer purchased a kneeling device that was portable and worked on rough terrain.

A veteran with PTSD was working for state government on a team project.
The employer decided to move the team’s office to the basement of a building. Once the move occurred, the veteran realized that the noises in the basement were triggering memories of explosions and causing flare ups of his PTSD. The employer did not want to move the entire team again but was able to find an office on the first floor of the same building for the veteran. The rest of the team remained in the basement, but team meetings were held upstairs.

A veteran returned to his civilian job as a manager of sales for a small employer.
While in the service, he sustained a TBI. His employer had upgraded the office computer system and the veteran had trouble using the new computer system, causing him stress and anxiety. The employer allowed the veteran time for training to learn the new computer system.

A veteran, who is now a delivery truck driver, had PTSD that resulted in a sleep disorder.

He was having difficulty with his nightshift schedule. His employer transferred him to a dayshift when an opening became available.

A counselor with PTSD needed to use a service dog at work to decrease his anxiety.
Even as a veteran, his employer was concerned about having a dog present when clients were being counseled. The employer allowed the use of the service dog, but provided a separate area for the dog to stay in during counseling sessions with clients.

A veteran with head and neck injuries and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) was working as a graphic designer in a cubicle environment.
He had chronic pain, which was exacerbated by using a computer mouse, and PTSD, which was exacerbated by noise. The employer preferred to have the designer work in the office with his team, but there were no private offices available. Instead, the employer provided an ergonomic mouse and a noise canceling headset.

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