

# JAN

Job Accommodation Network

Practical Solutions • Workplace Success

## Accommodation and Compliance Series

# Accommodation and Compliance Series: Employees with Guillain-Barri Syndrome

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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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Updated 01/24/2019.

## **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 Guillain-Barri Syndrome**

Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS) can affect anybody but is rare, affecting only about one person in 100,000. The first symptoms of this disorder include varying degrees of weakness or tingling sensations in the legs, which can later spread to the arms and upper body. These symptoms can increase in intensity until certain muscles cannot be used at all and, when severe, the person is almost totally paralyzed. In these cases the disorder is life threatening and is considered a medical emergency. Most individuals, however, have good recovery from even the most severe cases of GBS, although some continue to have a certain degree of weakness.

### **Guillain-Barri Syndrome 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 Guillain-Barri Syndrome**

People with Guillain-Barré Syndrome 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 Guillain-Barré Syndrome 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**

##### Decreased Stamina/Fatigue

- Aide/Assistant/Attendant
- Anti-fatigue Matting
- Elevating Wheelchairs
- Ergonomic Assessments
- Ergonomic Equipment
- Flexible Schedule
- Job Restructuring
- Periodic Rest Breaks
- Scooters

- Stand-lean Stools
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
- Walkers
- Wearable Anti-fatigue Matting
- Wheelchairs
- Worksite Redesign / Modified Workspace

## Grasping

- Industrial Setting
  - Anti-vibration Gloves
  - Anti-vibration Tool Wraps
  - Compact Material Handling
  - Ergonomic and Pneumatic Tools
  - Mop Buckets
  - Mops and Mop Handles
  - Motorized Carts
  - Multi-Purpose Carts
  - Tool Balancers
- Office Setting
  - Auto-dialers
  - Automated Filing Systems
  - Book Holders
  - Dental and Surgical Instruments
  - Electric Scissors
  - Ergonomic Scissors
  - File Carousels
  - Filing Trays
  - Grip Aids
  - Hands-free Telephones
  - Headsets
  - Left Hand-Dominant Keyboards
  - Money Handling Products

- One-Handed Keyboards
- Page Turners
- Reachers
- Shoulder Rests for Telephone Handsets
- Scribe/Notetaker
- Writing Aids
- Other
  - Aide/Assistant/Attendant
  - Door Knob Grips and Handles
  - Ergonomic Knives
  - Steering Grips

#### Handling/Fingering

- Computer Access
  - Alternative Input Devices
  - Alternative Keyboards
  - Alternative Mice
  - Articulating Keyboard Trays
  - Ergonomic Equipment
  - Forearm Supports
  - Keyguards
  - Miniature Keyboards
  - On-Screen Keyboards
  - One-Handed Keyboards
  - Scribe/Notetaker
  - Speech Recognition Software
  - Typing / Keyboarding Aids
- Other
  - Aide/Assistant/Attendant
  - Anti-vibration Gloves
  - Anti-vibration Tool Wraps
  - Book Holders

- Compact Material Handling
- Ergonomic and Pneumatic Tools
- Extra Grip Gloves
- Grip Aids
- Money Handling Products
- Page Turners
- Periodic Rest Breaks
- Vacuum Pickup Tools
- Writing Aids

#### 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**

#### Commute

- Flexible Schedule
- Ridesharing/Carpooling
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
- Transportation Assistance

## Situations and Solutions:

**A new employee had only worked for a manufacturing company for four months and had not accrued paid leave at the time that symptoms of Guillain-Barré Syndrome developed.**

The employer provided unpaid leave as an accommodation and were able to hold the employees' position open for when they were able to return to work.

**A nurse case manager recovering from Guillain-Barré Syndrome was not able to access the computer due to weakness and a loss of coordination in their upper extremities.**

The employer provided speech recognition software, a telephone headset, and a head mouse as an accommodation.

**An individual with Guillain-Barré Syndrome was released to return to work following an extensive recovery period.**

The employee asked to work light duty. In lieu of this the employer provided a modified schedule and job restructuring while allowing a transition work arrangement. With this type of arrangement the employee gradually increased their hours and work duties over a short period of time and was able to eventually work a typical schedule.

**An executive for a large corporation developed Guillain-Barré Syndrome and was not able to commute to work.**

The employee was accommodated with a work-from-home arrangement and alternative input software to access a computer.

**A teacher developed Guillain-Barré Syndrome during summer break, but was able to return to work at the start of the fall semester if provided with accommodations.**

The employee used a wheelchair and was not able to access certain items in the classroom or the employee restroom. As an accommodation the employer modified the employee restroom so that the employee could access it independently, provided a smart board with a laptop and laptop tray for the wheelchair, purchased an accessible desk, and they lowered the shelves and bookcases that were inaccessible. The employee was permitted to come into the classroom prior to the semester starting to ensure that the classroom had been modified and prepared for her to successfully begin the new school year.

## 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)  
<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](mailto: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.

### **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](mailto: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.

### **GBS/CIDP Foundation International**

The Holly Building

104 1/2 Forrest Avenue

Narberth, PA 19072

Toll Free: (866) 224-3301

Direct: (610) 667-0131

Fax: (610) 667-7036

<https://www.gbs-cidp.org>

The GBS|CIDP Foundation International is the preeminent global non-profit organization supporting individuals and their families affected by Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS), chronic inflammatory demyelinating polyneuropathy (CIDP), and related syndromes such as multifocal motor neuropathy (MMN) through a commitment to support, education, research, and advocacy.

### **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.

### **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](mailto: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.

## **Remedy's Health Communities**

<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.

**The Foundation for Peripheral Neuropathy**

485 Half Day Road

Suite 350

Buffalo Grove, IL 60089

Toll Free: (877) 883-9942

Fax: (847) 883-9960

[info@tffpn.org](mailto:info@tffpn.org)

<https://www.foundationforpn.org/>

The Foundation for Peripheral Neuropathy is a Public Charity committed to fostering collaboration among today's most gifted and dedicated neuroscientists and physicians. These specialists from around the country will help us maintain a comprehensive view of the field and determine the research areas that hold the most promise in neuropathy research and treatment to develop new and effective therapies that can reverse, reduce and one day eliminate Peripheral Neuropathy. It is our ultimate goal to utilize every means and opportunity to dramatically improve the lives of those living with this painful and debilitating disorder.

**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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