

# JAN

Job Accommodation Network

Practical Solutions • Workplace Success

## Accommodation and Compliance Series

# Accommodation and Compliance Series: Employees with Myasthenia Gravis

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## 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.

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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 Myasthenia Gravis**

The name "Myasthenia Gravis" comes from the Greek and Latin words meaning "grave muscular weakness." The most common form of myasthenia gravis is a chronic autoimmune neuromuscular disorder that is characterized by fluctuating weakness of the voluntary muscle groups, which worsens with use of the affected muscle. Different muscle groups are affected in different individuals. Certain muscles are more frequently involved, including the ones that control eye movements, eyelids, chewing, swallowing, coughing, and facial expression. Muscles that control breathing and movements of the arms and legs may also be affected. Weakness of the muscles needed for breathing may cause shortness of breath, difficulty taking a deep breath, and coughing. The "gravis" or seriousness of myasthenia is noticeable when breathing muscles are affected.

### **Myasthenia Gravis 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 Myasthenia Gravis**

People with myasthenia gravis 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 myasthenia gravis 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

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

- One-Handed Keyboards
- Page Turners
- Reachers
- Scribe/Notetaker
- Shoulder Rests for Telephone Handsets
- Steering Grips
- Tool Balancers
- Writing Aids

#### Handling/Fingering

- Industry Work
  - Anti-vibration Gloves
  - Anti-vibration Tool Wraps
  - Compact Material Handling
  - Ergonomic and Pneumatic Tools
  - Extra Grip Gloves
  - Grip Aids
  - Money Handling Products
  - Vacuum Pickup Tools
- Office Work
  - Alternative Input Devices
  - Alternative Keyboards
  - Alternative Mice
  - Articulating Keyboard Trays
  - Book Holders
  - Ergonomic Equipment
  - Expanded Keyboards
  - Forearm Supports
  - Keyguards
  - Miniature Keyboards
  - On-Screen Keyboards
  - One-Handed Keyboards

- Page Turners
- Other Services
  - Aide/Assistant/Attendant
  - Periodic Rest Breaks
  - Scribe/Notetaker

#### Overall Body Weakness/Strength

- Lifting/Moving
  - Animal Lift Tables
  - Battery Powered Lift Tables
  - Compact Material Handling
  - Lift Tables
  - Linen Carts
  - Multi-Purpose Carts
  - Patient Lifts (General)
- Other Services
  - Aide/Assistant/Attendant
  - Modified Break Schedule
  - Periodic Rest Breaks
  - Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
- Personal Mobility
  - Elevating Wheelchairs
  - Fall Protection
  - Foldable / Transport Wheelchairs
  - Independent Living Aids
  - Large-Rated Scooters
  - Large-Rated Wheelchairs
  - Personal Safety and Fall Alert Devices
  - Personal Transportation and Mobility Products
  - Power Assist for Manual Wheelchairs
  - Scooters
  - Stand-up Wheelchairs

- Walkers
- Walkers with Seats
- Wheelchairs
- Work Space Access
  - Adjustable and Ergonomic School Desks and Equipment
  - Anti-fatigue Matting
  - Ergonomic and Adjustable Office Chairs
  - Ergonomic Equipment
  - Forearm Supports
  - Grab Bars
  - Office Chairs with Brakes and Locking Casters
  - Stair Lifts
  - Stand-lean Stools
  - Toileting Aids
  - Wearable Anti-fatigue Matting
  - Worksite Redesign / Modified Workspace

## Reaching

- Adjustable Workstations for Industrial Settings
- Adjustable Workstations for Office Settings
- Aerial Lifts
- Ergonomic Assessments
- Ergonomic Equipment
- Height Adjustable Table Legs
- Independent Living Aids
- Large-Rated Small Step Ladders
- Lift Tables
- Low Task Chair
- Periodic Rest Breaks
- Power Lift IV Stands
- Reachers
- Rolling Safety Ladders



- Step Stools
- Work Platforms

## 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

### Parking

- Accessible Parking Space
- Flexible Schedule
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
- Wheelchairs

#### 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

#### Work Station Access

- Adjustable and Ergonomic School Desks and Equipment
- Adjustable Desk Top Workstations for Office Settings
- Adjustable Workstations for Industrial Settings
- Anti-fatigue Matting
- Articulating Keyboard Trays

- Assist Lift Cushions
- Chair Mats
- Chairs for Little People
- Chairs for People who are Tall
- Dual Monitors
- Elevating Lift and Office Chairs
- Ergonomic and Adjustable Office Chairs
- Ergonomic Equipment
- Expanded Keyboards
- Forearm Supports
- Forward Leaning Chairs
- Large-Rated Chairs
- Monitor Risers
- Mousing Surfaces
- Stand-lean Stools
- Supine Workstations
- Work Platforms
- Zero Gravity (reclining) Chairs

## Situations and Solutions:

**An administrator was having problems handling stress and had some double vision from myasthenia gravis.**

He was allowed to take rest breaks, assigned a support person in the workplace, and provided a reader as an accommodation.

**A clerical worker with myasthenia gravis was missing a lot of work because of problems breathing, speaking, and walking.**

She was allowed to work at home part-time and to communicate via e-mail as an accommodation.

**A delivery person was having difficulty loading and unloading his truck due to lower extremity weakness from myasthenia gravis.**

He was accommodated with a transfer to a less physically demanding delivery route.

**A teacher with myasthenia gravis was having difficulty meeting the physical demands of her job due to muscle fatigue.**

She was accommodated with a full-time teaching aid, frequently used supplies/equipment were moved closer to her desk, and she was allowed several short rest breaks during the day.

**A hospital employee with myasthenia gravis was having difficulty walking.**

She was accommodated with a parking space closer to her work-site and was provided a scooter to use at work.

## 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.

### **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.

**Myasthenia Gravis Foundation of America**

355 Lexington Avenue,  
15th Floor  
New York, NY 10017  
Toll Free: (800) 541-5454  
Fax: (212) 370-9047  
<http://www.myasthenia.org/>

The Myasthenia Gravis Foundation of America (MGFA) is the only national volunteer health agency dedicated solely to the fight against myasthenia gravis. MGFA, a nonprofit organization, was established to carry out the following: "To facilitate the timely diagnosis and optimal care of individuals affected by myasthenia gravis and closely related disorders and to improve their lives through programs of patient services, public information, medical research, professional education, advocacy and patient care." The vision of the Foundation is to have a "World Without MG."

**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.

**Office on Women's Health**

Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW Room 712E  
Washington, DC 20201  
Toll Free: (800) 994-9662  
Direct: (202) 690-7650  
Fax: (202) 205-2631  
<http://www.womenshealth.gov/>

The Office on Women's Health (OWH), part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), works to improve the health and sense of well-being of all U.S. women and girls. OWH serves as the focal point for women's health activities across HHS offices and agencies and leads HHS efforts to ensure that all women and girls achieve the best possible health.

**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.



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