

What if there is a performance problem?

You may have company guidelines for addressing performance problems. If not, these general guidelines may be helpful:

- ▶ Establish clear standards of performance. Be explicit about expectations. Define quality in terms of specific behaviors and standards. Describe consequences of inadequate performance.
- ▶ If problems arise, analyze the situation to determine issues that must be addressed.
- ▶ Meet with the employee and state the issue clearly and precisely.
- ▶ Use facts and documentation to support your statement of the issue.
- ▶ Describe the impact of the issue.
- ▶ State clearly how behavior/performance must change to resolve the situation.
- ▶ State the consequences if the problem is not solved.
- ▶ Allow the employee to respond to your concerns and to provide additional information.
- ▶ Use open-ended questions and active listening to arrive at possible solutions. For example, say, "Describe what you think might work."
- ▶ Agree on a time frame for follow-up and describe how you will monitor progress.
- ▶ End the meeting on a positive note.
- ▶ Document the results of the meeting and all follow-up activities in your records.

Where can I go for additional information and assistance?

Accommodations – Legal Requirements

Michigan Civil Rights Commission:
313/456-3700 or 313/961-1552 (TTY)
1-800-482-3604 (Upper Peninsula and northern Lower Peninsula)

Michigan Commission on Disability Concerns:
517/334-8000 (voice/TTY)

Michigan Association of Centers for Independent Living:
517/339-0539 (voice/TTY)

Accommodations – Questions

Michigan Accommodation Center:
1-888-271-8337 (voice/TTY)

Assistive Technology Project:
1-800-760-4600 (voice/TTY)

Job Accommodation Network (JAN):
1-800-232-9675 (voice/TTY)

Services for Businesses and Employment Services for Eligible Persons with a Disability

Michigan Rehabilitation Services:
1-800-605-6722 (voice)
1-888-605-6722 (TTY)

Michigan Commission for the Blind:
1-800-292-4200 (voice)
1-888-864-1212 (TTY)

Tax Incentives

Federal tax incentives:
1-800-829-1040 (voice)
1-800-829-4059 (TTY)



Michigan Department of
Career Development
Michigan Rehabilitation Services
P.O. Box 30010
Lansing, Michigan 48909

1-800-605-6722 (voice)
1-888-605-6722 (TTY)

Visit MRS on the Internet at:
www.michigan.gov/mdcd

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Michigan Rehabilitation Services

How to Hire and Supervise a Person with a Disability

Does disability matter?

Many of us feel uncomfortable about the topic of disability. In the face of this discomfort, employers sometimes lose sight of the fact that a disability is only one characteristic of an individual, overlooking the valuable work skills the person has to offer.

In addition, employers often anticipate that an employee who has a disability will be more difficult to supervise than one who does not. In truth, employers have to manage performance and “people problems” with all employees.

Two of your most important responsibilities as an employer are to match the right job with the right person and manage your employees to their maximum performance. If an employee has a disability, these responsibilities are no different.

What are accommodations?

If you find you have to address a disability-related issue, the employee with a disability will usually have valuable information regarding what will help him or her to meet job standards.

Sometimes “accommodations” — adjustments in how work is done — may be needed by the worker with a disability. This may mean using different tools or equipment, altering the flow of work, or changing how the person is trained to perform the job.

An accommodation should not compromise performance standards.

Technical assistance is available to managers who are considering accommodations for their workers. Please see the back of this brochure for a listing of agencies that can answer your questions and provide assistance.

It is important to remember that employees with disabilities often will need no accommodations.

Once job accommodations are in place, the principles of managing performance are the same as for all employees. Positive reinforcement, clear feedback, and consistent policies — the techniques that all successful managers use — are equally effective with employees who have disabilities.

How should work standards be evaluated?

All employees must know the standards by which their performance is evaluated. Employees who have disabilities are no exception.

When subjective judgments of quality are a problem, an appropriate accommodation may be to devise a clear, objective description of the performance quality that is desired.

However, employers are not required to hire or retain individuals who are not able to meet qualitative or quantitative standards, with or without accommodations.

The following questions may help you to plan accommodations — and even help you address problems with other employees.

- ▶ Does the employee know exactly what the standard is?
- ▶ Does the employee know there is a discrepancy between the standard and his or her performance?
- ▶ Does the employee know the consequences of unsatisfactory job performance?

How should personal problems be handled?

Employers should not treat the personal problems of workers with disabilities any differently from the way the problems of other employees are handled.

If your company has an Employee Assistance Program, this service can be a valuable resource for workers with disabilities, too.

If one of your employees with a disability must be referred for alcohol or drug treatment, it is best for you to focus on work performance rather than on his or her progress in treatment.

And, when an employee is referred for treatment, a reasonable accommodation may be to adjust his or her work schedule to allow for treatment time.

Neither Public Act 220 — Michigan's disability civil rights law — nor the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) extends protection to individuals who “cause a risk to others” or who use alcohol or illegal drugs on the job.