



## National Network

Information, Guidance, and Training on the  
Americans with Disabilities Act

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<https://adata.org/faq/what-process-request-reasonable-accommodation>

### What is the process to request a reasonable accommodation in employment?

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According to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), when an individual decides to request an accommodation, the individual or his/her representative must let the employer know that s/he needs an adjustment or change at work for a reason related to a medical condition. There is no need to mention the ADA or use the phrase “reasonable accommodation.”

Requests for reasonable accommodation do not have to be in writing and can be requested in a face-to-face conversation or using any other method of communication. Employers may choose to write a memo or letter confirming the employee’s request or may ask the employee to fill out a form or submit the request in written form. However, the employee may want to put the request in writing even if the employer does not require it. Sometimes it is useful to have a paper trail in case there is a dispute about whether or when the accommodation was requested.

Example A: An employee tells her supervisor, "I'm having trouble getting to work at my scheduled starting time because of medical treatments I'm undergoing." This is a request for a reasonable accommodation.

Example B: A new employee, who uses a wheelchair, informs the employer that her wheelchair cannot fit under the desk in her office. This is a request for reasonable accommodation.

Incorrect Example C: An employee tells his supervisor that he would like a new chair because his present one is uncomfortable. Although this is a request for a change at work, his statement is insufficient to put the employer on notice that he is requesting reasonable accommodation. He does not link his need for the new chair with a medical condition.

While an employer cannot ignore the initial request, this request does not necessarily mean that the employer is required to provide the change. A request for reasonable accommodation is the first step in an informal, interactive process between the employee and the employer. In some instances, before addressing the merits of the accommodation request, the employer needs to determine if the individual's medical condition meets the ADA definition of "disability," a prerequisite for the individual to be entitled to a reasonable accommodation.

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For additional information, take a look at the following resources:

FAQ: [What are the limitations on the obligation to make a reasonable accommodation?](#)

FAQ: [What does the term “readily achievable” mean?](#)

FAQ: [How is the term “readily achievable” determined in a multi site business?](#)

FAQ: [When barrier removal is not readily achievable, what kinds of alternative steps are required by the ADA?](#)

Fact Sheet: [Reasonable Accommodations in the Workplace](#)

Fact Sheet: [Small Business and ADA Readily Achievable Requirements](#)