



# From Wounded Warrior to Civilian Employee:

A Workplace Reference Guide  
for Managers and Supervisors



Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy  
(Manpower and Reserve Affairs)

March 2012



## Report Documentation Page

*Form Approved*  
*OMB No. 0704-0188*

Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.

1. REPORT DATE <b>12 MAR 2012</b>	2. REPORT TYPE	3. DATES COVERED <b>00-00-2012 to 00-00-2012</b>			
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE <b>From Wounded Warrior To Civilian Employee: A Workplace Reference Guide For Managers And Supervisors</b>		5a. CONTRACT NUMBER			
		5b. GRANT NUMBER			
		5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER			
6. AUTHOR(S)		5d. PROJECT NUMBER			
		5e. TASK NUMBER			
		5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER			
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) <b>Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy,(Manpower and Reserve Affairs),Washington,DC,20350</b>		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER			
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)		10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)			
		11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)			
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT <b>Approved for public release; distribution unlimited</b>					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT <b>Medical advances have allowed combat wounded service members to obtain medical treatment faster and closer to the point of injury which has resulted in increased survival rates for our servicemen and women. This means more men and women are returning home, and some are returning with disabilities. Many are reintegrating to civilian life and seeking employment. Some are living with visible and invisible wounds due to the unconventional nature of our current conflicts.</b>					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT <b>Same as Report (SAR)</b>	18. NUMBER OF PAGES <b>31</b>	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT <b>unclassified</b>	b. ABSTRACT <b>unclassified</b>	c. THIS PAGE <b>unclassified</b>			



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .....	3
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY’S COMMITMENT TO EXECUTIVE ORDER 13548 – INCREASING FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.....	4
A TEAM EFFORT.....	5
TRANSITION TO THE CIVILIAN WORKFORCE AND COMMON COMBAT-RELATED DISABILITIES.....	7
POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD).....	8
TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY (TBI).....	11
SUICIDE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE.....	13
ETIQUETTE FOR THE WORKFORCE.....	16
HANDLING LEAVE REQUESTS.....	18
RETENTION STRATEGIES.....	20
WORKPLACE ACCOMMODATIONS.....	22
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR EMPLOYERS.....	24
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR EMPLOYEES.....	26

*“We, as a nation, have no higher obligation than to care for our  
Wounded Warriors who have sacrificed so much to  
serve our nation.”*

~ Robert Work, Under Secretary of the Navy



## Introduction

Medical advances have allowed combat wounded service members to obtain medical treatment faster and closer to the point of injury which has resulted in increased survival rates for our servicemen and women. This means more men and women are returning home, and some are returning with disabilities. Many are reintegrating to civilian life and seeking employment. Some are living with visible and invisible wounds due to the unconventional nature of our current conflicts.

Today, employers are looking for individuals who are mission- and team-oriented leaders with a variety of skills and experience gained from their military service. Our veterans bring this to the civilian workplace. This quick reference guide for employers, managers, and supervisors provides information on how to successfully support veterans who have transitioned to the civilian workplace. Specific areas addressed in this guide include the Department of the Navy's (DON) commitment to individuals with disabilities and Wounded Warriors, as well as Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), suicide prevention and response, disability etiquette for the workforce, handling leave requests, retention strategies, workplace accommodations, and additional resources.

Equality of opportunity is recognized as an essential element of readiness and is vital in retaining a top-quality workforce in order to accomplish the DON's strategic mission. DON's policy is to provide reasonable accommodation to qualified employees and applicants with disabilities. An effective reasonable accommodation policy is an important aspect of DON's commitment to create employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

*“Wounded Warriors are, by definition, tenacious and resilient.  
They are leaders and doers.”*

~ Juan Garcia, Assistant Secretary of the Navy  
(Manpower and Reserve Affairs)

## The Department of the Navy's Commitment to Executive Order 13548 – Increasing Federal Employment of Individuals with Disabilities

There are approximately 54 million Americans living with disabilities. There are currently more than 13,000 DON employees who have self-identified as having a disability. The DON is committed to meeting the goals of Executive Order 13548, Increasing Federal Employment of Individuals with Disabilities by implementing efforts to increase recruitment, hiring, and retention of individuals with disabilities. Part of the DON's commitment to increasing employment of individuals with disabilities, includes hiring of our Wounded Warriors.



*“The word is out there. NAVSEA is serious about hiring, training, and developing Wounded Warriors, and providing them with careers, and not just jobs.”*

~ Vice Admiral Kevin McCoy, USN, Commander,  
Naval Sea Systems Command

## **A Team Effort**

Employers and employees both benefit from a work environment that facilitates the retention of all skilled and qualified workers. It takes a team to make this happen and you have DON resources available to assist you which include:

### **Human Resources Office (HRO)**

Your HRO provides advisory services (e.g., Equal Employment Opportunity, labor and employee relations, recruitment and staffing, and strategic recruitment planning).

### **EEO Program**

It is DON policy to ensure equality of opportunity in employment for all employees and applicants. Your servicing EEO Office can provide you advice and guidance on ensuring equality of employment, to include information of your role as a supervisor or manager in the DON EEO program, the reasonable accommodations process, ensuring accessibility for individuals with disabilities, and proactive prevention of discrimination.

### **Employee Relations**

Employee relations representatives assist in maintaining employer-employee relationships that contribute to job satisfaction, increased productivity, motivation, and morale. Employee relations practitioners also provide advice and guidance to supervisors on how to address poor performance and employee misconduct. Due to the complexity of performance management requirements and potential misconduct issues (progressive discipline and procedural due process), please seek advice and guidance from employee relations representatives. If the issue involves rights under the EEO statutes, please contact the EEO Office.

### **Civilian Employee Assistance Program (CEAP)**

CEAP offers professional help with assessing a problem, providing short-term counseling, and referring civilian employees to other specialized professionals. Other types of personal issues which may adversely impact employee performance and/or conduct that would benefit from a CEAP referral include adoption, aging, anxiety, child care, depression, eating disorders, elder care, financial concerns, gambling, grief and loss, legal concerns, marital issues, medical problems, money management, parenting, psychiatric disorders, relationship difficulties, stress, etc.



It is DON policy to offer assistance to employees with personal issues which have or may have an adverse impact on job performance and/or conduct. Such issues include those relating to family matters, misusing drugs and/or alcohol, surviving traumatic events, etc. When feasible the CEAP may also be extended to family members of civilian employees.



## **Transition to the Civilian Workforce and Common Combat-related Disabilities**

Service members have experienced increased survival rates; yet, many are returning with physical and psychological disabilities.

Some physical disabilities that are common to combat exposed veterans may include: gunshot wounds, burns, amputations, paralysis, blast injuries and sensory impairments (e.g., hearing and sight).

Some hidden disabilities may include: Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).

The DON is committed to supporting individuals with disabilities, which includes both disabled veterans and Wounded Warriors. The DON has implemented an effective reasonable accommodation policy which can be located at the following website: <http://www.public.navy.mil/donhr/eo/ResourceLibrary/Pages/InstructionsandGuidance.aspx>

Creating a supportive and conducive workplace environment promotes inclusive practices.



## Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can occur after someone experiences or observes a traumatic event such as:

- Combat
- Child abuse
- Terrorist attack
- Sexual/physical assault
- Serious accident
- Natural disaster

Many Americans have experienced or witnessed a traumatic event and, as a result, will present some stress-related reactions. More than half of men and women will experience at least one traumatic event during their lifetime. Of those who do, more than 10% will develop PTSD. For some events, such as combat and sexual assault, the numbers affected by PTSD are greater.<sup>1</sup>

Traumatic events create changes in the brain that may result in PTSD. Most people who go through a traumatic event have some symptoms; yet only some will develop PTSD. While it isn't clear why some people develop PTSD and others don't, most people who develop PTSD get better at some time.

It is important to understand that individuals living with PTSD may have different symptoms. Treatment, reasonable accommodations, and recovery will vary according to the unique circumstances of the individual.

### **PTSD typically manifests in the following four types of symptoms:**

- Re-experiencing and recollections of the event  
*Nightmares, flashbacks, intrusive thoughts*
- Fear and avoidance behavior  
*Family and social withdrawal, isolation, social phobias*
- Numbing and emotional distancing  
*Can't express feelings, avoiding memories, hard to remember or talk about trauma, emotional withdrawal, avoidance of relationships, and lack of interest*
- Agitated state of constant wakefulness and alertness  
*Hyper-vigilant behavior, sudden startle, distrust, anger, irritability and poor concentration*

---

<sup>1</sup> The National Center for PTSD, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

PTSD symptoms can be triggered by various sights, sounds, people, places and things. Understanding and being able to identify potential triggers can help supervisors and mentors create a more comfortable work environment for the Wounded Warrior.

#### **PTSD – What To Do:**

- Supervisors should create a supportive environment that encourages employee wellness and is receptive to the needs of all employees.
- Ensure all employees are aware of the reasonable accommodation procedures.
- If a supervisor believes that the employee is experiencing a work-related issue, engage in a conversation with the employee to determine what needs to be done to improve performance or conduct.

#### **Who to Contact:**

1. Consult your Civilian Employee Assistance Program (CEAP) with PTSD related questions.<sup>2</sup>
2. A reasonable accommodation may be required to assist a qualified individual with a disability to perform the essential functions of their position. Generally speaking, an employee must request a reasonable accommodation.<sup>3</sup> Each person's need for a reasonable accommodation must be assessed individually as PTSD symptoms may manifest differently in different people. Please contact your

---

<sup>2</sup> In consulting with the CEAP representative, please ensure that confidential medical information, to include the fact that an individual has a disability is not disclosed. The American with Disabilities Act prohibits the disclosure of medical information of all employees, whether or not they are an individual with a disability, except in certain limited situations, which do not include the disclosure to CEAP representatives for informational purpose unrelated to an active reasonable accommodation request. The fact that an employee is receiving a reasonable accommodation must also not be disclosed because such a disclosure amounts to a disclosure that the individual has a disability.

<sup>3</sup> A reasonable accommodation request occurs when an employee or applicant or his/her representative lets the employer know that he/she needs an adjustment or change at work related to a medical condition. The request does not have to contain any magic words such as, reasonable accommodation, American with Disabilities Act, or Rehabilitation Act. The request can be in plain English and it is not required to be in writing. Examples of statement that trigger a reasonable accommodation discussion include an employee stating, "I am having trouble getting to work at my scheduled starting time because of medication I am taking," or "I need two weeks off to get medical treatment for a back problem." A statement from an employee saying they need a new chair because their current chair is uncomfortable is not a reasonable accommodation request because the employee did not link the need for a new chair to a medical condition.

Equal Employment Officer (EEO) or Human Resource (HR) office for questions concerning reasonable accommodation. It is important to note that a person with a disability is still required and desires to perform the essential functions of their position.

3. Additional resources:

- The Federal Occupational Health's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, 800-222-0364 or 888-262-7848 (TTY).
- America's Heroes At Work – a U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) project that addresses the employment challenges of returning Service members and veterans living with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and/or Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) — [www.americasheroesatwork.gov](http://www.americasheroesatwork.gov).
- Job Accommodation Network – Accommodation and Compliance Series: Employees with Post-traumatic Stress Disorder [www.askjan.org](http://www.askjan.org).



## Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) occurs when a sudden trauma causes damage to the brain. TBI can result when the head suddenly and violently hits an object, or when an object pierces the skull and enters brain tissue. TBI is a serious public health problem in the United States. Recent data shows that, on average, approximately 1.7 million people sustain a traumatic brain injury annually.

TBI Symptoms can be physical, cognitive, or psychological and behavioral. Symptoms of a TBI can be mild, moderate, or severe, depending on the extent of the damage to the brain.

### **Mild TBI:**

A person with a mild TBI may remain conscious or may experience a loss of consciousness for a few seconds or minutes. Other symptoms of mild TBI include headache, confusion, lightheadedness, dizziness, blurred vision or tired eyes, ringing in the ears, bad taste in the mouth, fatigue or lethargy, a change in sleep patterns, behavioral or mood changes, and trouble with memory, concentration, attention, or thinking.

### **Moderate or Severe TBI:**

TBI symptoms are not limited to veterans and no two cases are exactly alike. A person with a moderate or severe TBI may show the similar symptoms listed under Mild TBI, but they may also have a headache that gets worse or does not go away, repeated vomiting or nausea, convulsions or seizures, an inability to awaken from sleep, dilation of one or both pupils of the eyes, slurred speech, weakness or numbness in the extremities, loss of coordination, and increased confusion, restlessness, or agitation.

### **TBI – What To Do:**

- Offer written rather than verbal instruction to mitigate memory problems for those who have trouble with memory.
- Be patient, flexible and supportive of the employee's condition.

---

<sup>4</sup>National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, National Institutes of Health.

<sup>5</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control.

<sup>6</sup>National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, National Institutes of Health.

<sup>7</sup>National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, National Institutes of Health.

### Who to Contact:

1. If you believe an employee is experiencing a work-related issue, engage in a conversation with the employee to determine what needs to be done to improve performance or conduct. During the conversation an employee may request a reasonable accommodation. If a request is made, the supervisor must engage in a discussion with the employee. Like many disabilities, TBI can impact individuals differently and each employee's need for reasonable accommodation must be individually assessed. For assistance please contact your EEO or HR office.<sup>8</sup>
2. Contact your CEAP for questions or more information on TBI.
3. Additional resource:
  - America's Heroes At Work – a [U.S. Department of Labor](#) (DOL) project that addresses the employment challenges of returning Service Members and Veterans living with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and/or Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) designed for employers [www.americasheroesatwork.gov](http://www.americasheroesatwork.gov).



---

<sup>8</sup> The conversation must be limited to the work related concerns, and unless the employee raises disability related issues and requests a reasonable accommodation the supervisor must avoid making disability related inquiries. The Americans with Disabilities Act limits an employer's ability to make disability related inquiries depending on the stage of employment. Disabilities or medical examinations of employees are limited to inquiries and examinations that are job related and consistent with business. A disability related inquiry is any question that is likely to elicit information about a disability. Please consult your EEO or HR Office for guidance on disability related performance or conduct concerns.

## Suicide Prevention and Response

The Department of Defense (DoD) and the DON takes the issue of suicide very seriously and is actively working to reduce the number of suicides. Suicidal thoughts expressed by employees must be taken seriously by all supervisors, mentors, and peers.

When service members transition from the military into civilian life, they may lose what the service provides: purpose, focus, achievement, responsibility, the sense of belonging and usefulness. The transition from military to civilian can be extremely difficult and stressful for some veterans. Adjusting to a civilian work environment from the military for a veteran can be challenging if the civilian job does not provide structure, support or meaning. A transitioning veteran can feel alienated in their new working environment, where people may not seem to understand the difficulties military members faced or the challenges they endured. Do not assume that all returning veterans suffer from mental health issues.

It is important that supervisors and co-workers be familiar with how to identify the signs and stressors in order to help those around them who may be having difficulty. Awareness, understanding, and early recognition can help prevent many of these tragic occurrences.

### **Factors that may lead to suicidal ideas:**

- Family and relationship crisis
- Financial crisis
- Losing valuable possessions (car, house, etc)
- Self-esteem issues and lack of self-worth
- Downward spiral of lifestyle and personal changes
- Feelings of abandonment, lack of social concern and isolation
- Drug and alcohol influences
- Feelings of ridicule and humiliation
- Coping with new physical appearance (burns, prosthetics, etc.)

### **Signs of possible suicidal thoughts may include:**

- Discussions of a death wish or referring to death as a relief
- Social withdrawal and feelings of hopelessness
- Doing abnormally risky things (driving recklessly)



- Saying “goodbye” as if never to see people again
- Giving away precious belongings
- Consistent exhibitions of crying, sadness and self-loathing
- Anarchistic behavior and showing apathy towards authority and consequences
- Loss of zest for life and the future, along with deep depression-like symptoms

### **Responding to the Warning Sign**

You should respond to warning signs that a veteran may be thinking of suicide. If you are comfortable speaking with this person, you should ask the difficult questions that can help you understand that person's state-of-mind and intentions. Don't be afraid to approach the issue directly and just ask:

"Are you thinking of harming yourself?"

If their response gives any indication that they have been considering suicide or having suicidal thoughts, ask them to find help immediately. Offer to accompany them to your Civilian Employee Assistance Program (CEAP) who will make an appointment with a counselor and/or alert your building security officer. If your agency does not have a CEAP, offer to help them find another source of mental health counseling.

If the veteran has expressed thoughts of suicide and you think the veteran is in immediate danger, do not leave him or her alone until you have found help. This may require mobilizing other co-workers or the person's friends or family. If a crisis seems imminent, accompany your co-worker to an emergency room or community mental health crisis center. If your co-worker is unwilling to seek help or is uncooperative or combative, call 9-1-1 or 1-800-273-TALK (8255). Tell the dispatcher that you are concerned that the person with you "is a danger to themselves," or "they cannot take care of themselves." These phrases will alert the dispatcher that there is an immediate threat. Do not hesitate to make such a call if you suspect someone may be on the verge of harming him or herself.

One thing that our service men and women are not always good at is reaching out for help — a strong and supportive community can ease the transition for all veterans, as can ensuring that veterans are aware of the appropriate resources.

**Know where to get help:**

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline  
[www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/)

- 1-800-273-Talk (8255)
- Select option 1 for veteran.
- If you are in a medical emergency or suicidal crisis and you cannot connect, please call 911.

Here are some tips to remember: ACT  
ASK - CARE - TREAT

- ASK if someone is depressed and is thinking about suicide.
- Let them know you CARE.
- Get them assistance (TREATment) as soon as possible.

Other resources to consider:

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs at [www.mentalhealth.va.gov](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov)
- Visit the Veterans Crisis Hotline at [www.VeteransCrisisLine.net](http://www.VeteransCrisisLine.net)
- Commanding Officer's Suicide Prevention and Response  
[http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/support/suicide\\_prevention/Documents/Suicide%20Prevention%20Toolbox%2016May.pdf](http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/support/suicide_prevention/Documents/Suicide%20Prevention%20Toolbox%2016May.pdf)



## **Etiquette for the Workforce**

Supervisors should promote an environment of understanding, the respectful and equal treatment of people with disabilities, and inclusiveness in the workplace. The DON is committed to building a diverse workforce in an inclusive environment. Below are some measures which can be shared with your workforce.

### **Staff Education**

- Encourage staff to be familiar with programs, services and resources in case they are interested in learning more – consider inviting your EEO advisor to a staff meeting
- Learn and practice proper etiquette toward persons with disabilities
- Emphasize respect and inclusive work practices
- Do not tolerate offensive jokes and remarks
- Honor disability-related infrastructure norms (e.g. parking spaces and toilet stalls, which are specifically designated for persons with disabilities)

### **Workplace Conduct - General**

- Treat a person with a disability like any other employee; introduce them by name, not by status (i.e. Wounded Warrior, Veteran, or Disabled);
- Remember to keep all disabilities confidential
- Do not assume that because the person has a disability they need help; a person with a disability will often communicate when he/she needs help — if he/she does want help, ask before you act
- Do not make assumptions about the activities the person can perform
- Always announce yourself when approaching someone; avoid sneaking up on them
- Always shake hands; don't shy away from a prosthetic hand
- Avoid staring or looking away while speaking with an amputee or burn victim
- Do not pet or feed someone's service dog

### **Workplace Conduct - Mobility Issues**

- Ensure the workplace is accessible
- Keep wheelchair ramps unblocked

- Do not push someone's wheelchair without permission
- Do not move someone's crutches or cane without permission
- Sit down when speaking for more than a few minute with a person who uses a wheel chair so you are at eye level

#### **Workplace Conduct -Sight Impaired**

- Identify yourself before you make physical contact with the person
- Offer assistance rather than pulling someone's hand or arm
- Walk on opposite side of guide dog and do not touch a person's dog or walking cane
- If you are leaving a person who is blind, inform him/her you are leaving
- If serving food, use clockwise positions to describe food

#### **Workplace Conduct – Hearing Impaired**

- Look directly at the person when you are speaking as they may prefer to lip read
- Use normal tone of voice, do not shout
- Speak directly to the person with a disability, not their interpreter

Additional information can be found in the Job Accommodation Network <http://askjan.org> .



## Handling Leave Requests

Approval of leave, even leave without pay, is non-discretionary when leave is required for medical treatment of service connected illness or injury.<sup>9</sup> While employees are required to follow command procedures for requesting leave and can be disciplined for failing to do so, they cannot be denied leave for service connected illness and appointments regardless of whether the leave was appropriately requested or not. If a veteran employee needs to attend a service connected medical appointment, ask the person to provide as much advance notice as possible. Veterans, as other employees, are equally accountable for adhering to rules and behavior expectations. Established DON policy related to disciplinary actions is that discipline must not be punitive;<sup>10</sup> it should serve as a deterrent to unacceptable conduct or behavior and for correction of other situations that interfere with effective operations.

The DON encourages employees to live healthy lives and maintain balance in their family and worklife. It is DON policy to provide safe and comfortable work environment for employees to excel at their chosen occupations, unimpeded by factors that divert their attention from the mission.



---

<sup>9</sup> Executive Order 5396 Special Leaves of Absence to be Given Disabled Veterans in Need of Medical Treatment, 17 July 1930

<sup>10</sup> SECNAVINST12752.1

If a veteran or employee is experiencing difficulty with tardiness or absenteeism in the workplace, the supervisor should speak with the employee to understand the contributing circumstances. In some instances it is appropriate and beneficial for a supervisor to involve an appropriate representative when discussing absenteeism and tardiness. For example:

- If the leave requested is related to a service connected injury or disability and the employee requests a reasonable accommodation, it is appropriate to involve an EEO representative to discuss reasonable accommodation. Supervisors must follow the DON reasonable accommodation procedures found in the Civilian Human Resource Manual (CHRM), subchapter 1606.
- If a disciplinary action needs to be taken due to absenteeism by the employee, contact an Employee Relations Representative for advice related to employee rights. The Family and Medical Leave Act and other correlated acts may require that employers provide employee with written notification of entitlement to certain rights available to them under a statute. It may also be beneficial to involve your CEAP representative.

## Retention Strategies

Inclusive, fair and flexible practices, along with various workplace accommodation strategies can serve to enhance retention and mitigate chronic absenteeism.

### **Become a Model Employer of People with Disabilities**

The President directed agencies to make the Federal government the model employer of people with disabilities. By becoming a model employer, agencies will also improve their retention of people with disabilities. Currently, people with disabilities/targeted disabilities leave the Federal government at three times the rate of those without a disability. Retention is essential in order to receive the most return on your investment when identifying and hiring qualified people with disabilities. Agencies should use the strategies and actions listed in this section to create an accessible, positive, and welcoming environment for job applicants and employees with disabilities.

- Strive to make every aspect of the agency employment experience accessible to people with disabilities. This includes facilities, programs, technology, websites, and the benefits and privileges of employment.
- Ensure all employees, including employees with disabilities, are provided training opportunities throughout their careers to ensure they can perform the essential functions of their position.
- Use and publicize workplace flexibility strategies such as telework, flexi-place, and flextime, including the availability of these flexibilities for people requiring reasonable accommodations, to enhance employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.
- As a means of helping injured and ill employees return to work, engage in an interactive process to determine the availability and appropriateness of reasonable accommodations. Such accommodations could include but are not limited to telework, temporary light duty assignments, and job reassignment.

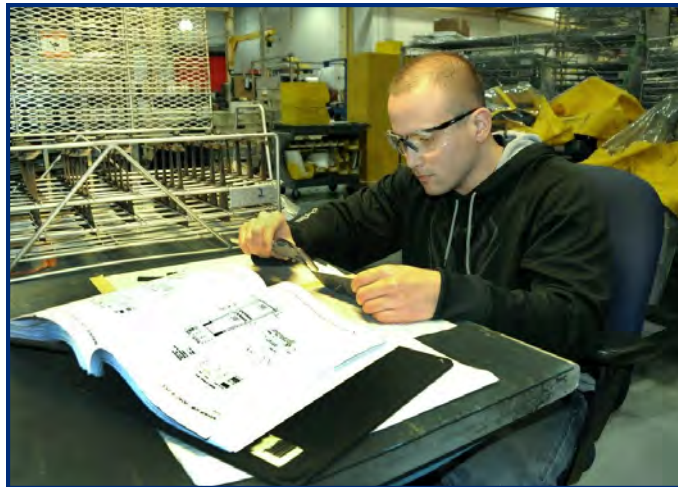
---

<sup>11</sup>Model Strategies for Recruitment and Hiring of People with Disabilities as Required Under Executive Order 13548. <http://www.chcoc.gov/transmittals/TransmittalDetails.aspx?TransmittalID=3228#Attachment1>

- Share your successful approaches and best practices for retaining people with disabilities with your HR Office and/or EEO Office so that others may benefit from this information.<sup>12</sup>

### **Telework**

- The Federal government is a leader in the use of innovative workplace flexibilities, including telework. Flexible work arrangements, such as alternative work schedules, telework, and various leave programs, give Federal employees more control over when and where they can accomplish their best work. They enable employees to meet their responsibilities at and away from work, while also helping organizations attract and retain a committed, effective workforce.



---

<sup>12</sup>Model Strategies for Recruitment and Hiring of People with Disabilities as Required Under Executive Order 13548. <http://www.chcoc.gov/transmittals/TransmittalDetails.aspx?TransmittalID=3228#Attachment1>



## **Workplace Accommodations**

Wounded Warriors, as with other employees with disabilities, may need to be accommodated in the workplace so they can perform the essential functions of their jobs. It is the policy of the DON for all military and civilian supervisors and employees to make every effort to provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals and applicants with disabilities unless to do so would create an undue hardship.

### **What is a reasonable accommodation?**

An accommodation is any change in the work environment or in the way things are customarily done that enables an individual with a disability to enjoy equal employment opportunity. Reasonable accommodation may include modifications or adjustments to the application process or modifications or adjustments to the work environment that will enable a qualified employee with a disability to perform essential functions of their job. Employers are also required to provide reasonable accommodations so that employees with disabilities can enjoy the “benefits and privileges of employment” equal to similarly situated employees such as access to credit unions, cafeterias, gyms, auditoriums, and command sponsored events and socials functions.

### **What do I do if I believe an employee is making a reasonable accommodation request?**

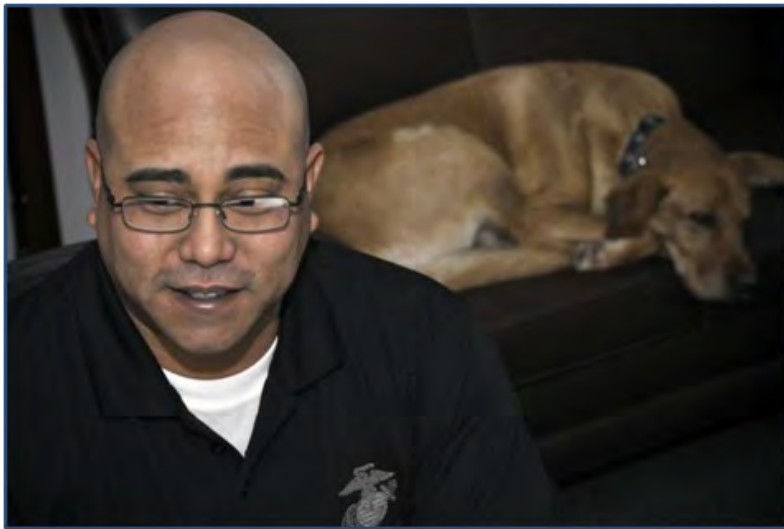
Ask the employee if he/she is requesting a reasonable accommodation. If the employee says no, the agency has met its obligation. If the employee says yes, you must engage in a conversation with the employee to make an informed decision about the request. If the individual’s disability is not obvious, you may need to ask questions concerning the nature of the disability and his/her functional limitations in order to identify an effective accommodation. Seek assistance from your Equal Employment Opportunity Office (EEO) or Human Resources (HR) Office to ensure the reasonable accommodation request is processed properly. DON policies and procedures regarding reasonable accommodations are listed below and can be found at the following website:

[www.public.navy.mil/donhr/eo/ResourceLibrary/Pages/InstructionsandGuidance.aspx](http://www.public.navy.mil/donhr/eo/ResourceLibrary/Pages/InstructionsandGuidance.aspx)

- Civilian Human Resources Manual, Subchapter 1606 – Procedures for Processing Requests for Reasonable Accommodations.
- Guide for Processing Reasonable Accommodation Requests.
- Guidance and Advisory Memorandum # 86 – Reassignment as a Reasonable Accommodation.

**How quickly must a reasonable accommodation be provided?**

DON policy requires a decision to provide a reasonable accommodation to be made within 30 calendar days of the request being made. An unnecessary delay can result in a violation of the Rehabilitation Act.



## **Additional Resources for Employers**

### **Web Resources:**

- People With Disabilities in the Federal Government: An Employment Guide [www.opm.gov/disability/text\\_files/Employment\\_Guide.PDF](http://www.opm.gov/disability/text_files/Employment_Guide.PDF)
- Increasing Disability Employment in the Federal Government: A Toolkit for Federal Agencies on Implementing Executive Order 13548 [www.dol.gov/odep/federal-hire](http://www.dol.gov/odep/federal-hire)
- Feds Hire Vets (one-stop resource for Federal veteran employment information) [www.fedshirevets.gov](http://www.fedshirevets.gov)
- America's Heroes At Work (U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) project that addresses the employment challenges of returning Service Members and Veterans living with **Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)** and/or **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)**) [www.americasheroesatwork.gov](http://www.americasheroesatwork.gov)
- National Resource Directory [www.nrd.gov](http://www.nrd.gov)
- Transition Assistance Guide [www.turbotap.org](http://www.turbotap.org)
- Employer Assistance and Resource Network (EARN): Helping Employers Hire and Retain People with Disabilities [www.askearn.org](http://www.askearn.org)
- PTSD Resources: [www.ncptsd.va.gov](http://www.ncptsd.va.gov)
- War-Related Illness and Injury Study Centers (WRIISCs): [www.vethealth.cio.med.va.gov/WRIISC.htm](http://www.vethealth.cio.med.va.gov/WRIISC.htm)
- Alcohol and Drug Abuse Resources: [www.nida.nih.gov/medstaff](http://www.nida.nih.gov/medstaff)

### **Reasonable Accommodations Resources:**

- Your HR and EEO representative serve as a primary resource for workplace accommodations.

- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's (EEOC) Enforcement Guidance: Reasonable Accommodation and Undue Hardship Under the ADA <http://www.eeoc.gov/policy/docs/accommodation.html>
- EEOC Guidance: Veterans with Service Connected Disabilities and the Americans with Disabilities Act" A Guide for Employers: <http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/veterans-disabilities-employers.html>
- Computer/Electronics Accommodations Program (CAP) <http://www.cap.mil> / 703-681-8813
- Job Accommodation Network <http://askjan.org/> / 800-526-7234

## Additional Resources for Employees

- Alcoholics Anonymous [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org) / 212-870-3400
- Center for Disease Control [www.cdc.gov/](http://www.cdc.gov/) /1-800-232-4636
- Deployment Health Clinical Center [www.pdhealth.mil](http://www.pdhealth.mil) /1-800-796-9699
- E-Benefits <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov> /1-800-983-0937
- Education (GI Bill) [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov) /1-888-GIBILL1 (442-4551)
- Health Care Benefits [www.va.gov/health/](http://www.va.gov/health/) /1-877-222-VETS (8387)
- Life Insurance [www.insurance.va.gov](http://www.insurance.va.gov) /1-800-669-8477
- National Institute of Mental Health Information Center [www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov) / 1-866-615-6464
- National Resource Directory [www.nrd.gov](http://www.nrd.gov)
- TRICARE Customer Service [www.tricare.mil](http://www.tricare.mil) / 1-800-600-9332
- VA Benefits [www.vba.va.gov/VBA/](http://www.vba.va.gov/VBA/) /1-800-827-1000
- VA Suicide Prevention Hotline [www.veteranscrisisline.net](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net) / 1-800-273-TALK (8255) / 1-888-SUICIDE (784-8200)
- Vet Centers [www.vetcenter.va.gov](http://www.vetcenter.va.gov) /1-877-WAR-VETS (927-8387)
- National AIDS Hotline [www.cdc.gov/hiv](http://www.cdc.gov/hiv) / 800-822-7422
- Telecommunication Devices for the Deaf (TDD) 800-829-4833
- VA National Center for PTSD [www.ptsd.va.gov](http://www.ptsd.va.gov) / 802-296-6300



