

# Accommodation assessment process

When an employee requests a change in their job responsibilities due to a disability, employers have many details to consider. Sedgwick can help.

One of the primary purposes of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and similar state laws is to protect qualified individuals from job discrimination based on disability. The ADA defines a disability as “a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.” The law requires that employers engage in an interactive process to determine whether an otherwise-qualified individual can perform the essential functions of their job with or without an accommodation. The employer must grant a reasonable accommodation unless it results in undue hardship.

Determining appropriate accommodation options can be a complex process; an employer must consider the nature of the condition, the restrictions it poses, the nature of the job and the extent of modifications needed. The key to reducing risk under the ADA, and ensuring the best possible outcome for both the employee and the employer, is the existence of efficient and compliant standard procedures that lead to an effective interactive process.

## Sedgwick has the experience you need

For over 20 years, we have developed best practice disability and job accommodation programs. We partner with our clients to develop integrated, customizable solutions that work seamlessly with employers' existing absence and disability programs and help ensure compliance.

## We are here to help – start to finish

Sedgwick's team includes experienced customer service managers, accommodation coordinators with claims management experience, and job accommodation specialists with a vocational rehabilitation or clinical background who are here to help you every step of the way. We provide several methods of claims intake, including by phone, online and referral services. Our quality assurance team regularly reviews representative samples of new claim requests

to ensure alignment with program expectations, and we give clients actionable data through our reporting capabilities, which include intake metrics, claim volumes, trends, utilization rates, accommodation types and call center performance.

In addition, Sedgwick also records all inbound contact center calls for quality assurance and coaching purposes – and to maintain a high level of customer service.

## Key steps to ensuring a successful program

### Starting the interactive process: capturing the request

The accommodation process typically begins when an employee requests a change in the way they perform their job or they exhaust all job-protected leave. For the best possible employee experience, we assign your organization a dedicated toll-free number that identifies your program to the customer service representative. They answer the calls using a client-defined, customized greeting. And once the request is submitted, our proprietary claims management platform triggers action items, due dates and contact schedules to ensure requests are reviewed, communicated and acted upon promptly.

### Working with the employee and healthcare providers to confirm the impairment

Once the request is captured, we then determine whether the individual has an ADA-qualifying disability, analyze the impairment and confirm the need for an accommodation. Our accommodation colleagues will set expectations with your employee, request reasonable documentation, and determine whether the employees can perform their job with an accommodation. As necessary, we will provide documentation and/or request clarification from the healthcare provider to describe the employee's impairment and suggest a possible accommodation. Our team leverages medical information and conversation(s) with the employee to assess the request and recommend options.

### Navigating through the interactive process

Once Sedgwick has developed options that will allow the employee to perform their essential job functions, we will engage your designated contact to determine if our recommended accommodation (or perhaps a different one) can get the employee back to work. Included in this discussion are any accommodations that the employee believes would help them do their job.

### Working together to determine the appropriate accommodation

In many cases, the interactive process will yield more than one potential accommodation. Because an employer has discretion in choosing which of the effective accommodations it will grant, we work with them to determine which one is the best option, based on an individual assessment of the employee's circumstances and the business needs.

### Implementing the accommodation

Once the accommodation is identified, the accommodation coordinator communicates it to the employee (and any employees who can help implement the accommodation in a timely fashion, such as a manager or HR professional). Then, Sedgwick will follow up with the employee and outline next steps.

## Our technology

We manage all workers' compensation, non-occupational disability, accommodation and liability claims from the same claims system. The platform provides access to real-time claim data to give frontline managers the work status information they need to manage their operations and maximize productivity. We can grant access to this claim information to anyone you designate. Those with access may view a range of claims data to review and add notes, sign up for alerts, set follow-up diaries, run reports, query data fields and view claim documents.

## The Sedgwick difference

Our team has extensive experience creating disability, leave and accommodation programs for employers and we know how to make them successful for employees. Our accommodation assessment process helps:

- Increase operational efficiency
- Keep requests timely and processes standard
- Reduce administrative costs and improve absence outcomes
- Reduce risk
- House requests, reviews, documents and decisions
- Provide a high-quality employee experience

We can offer an integrated approach in which the employee's disability, leave or workers' compensation claim starts with us. In addition, we can manage stand-alone claims, such as when an employee experiences a non-work-related injury or illness but could continue working. We also help clients identify stay-at-work opportunities including modified duty, modified schedules, assistive devices and reassignment to accommodate an employee's disability. In many cases, these opportunities can avoid the need for a leave of absence.

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To learn more about our accommodation assessment process, contact:

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*To learn more about our integrated and customized solutions, visit [SEDGWICK.COM](https://www.sedgwick.com)*