



SG ENABLE ONLINE HRM SERIES FOR EMPLOYERS

JOB ACCOMMODATION AND WORKPLACE ACCESSIBILITY

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SG ENABLE
Inclusive society. Enabled lives.

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01

BASICS AND BENEFITS
OF ACCESSIBILITY AND
UNIVERSAL DESIGN

INTRODUCTION



To better enable persons with disabilities to work and maximize their potential in employment, employers need to make their workplaces accessible and may also need to provide reasonable accommodations for individual employees. This guide will assist employers and supervisors in making workplaces more accessible to all and to understand the accommodation process.

Creating an accessible environment requires eliminating the physical, transportation, information and communications, technological and systems barriers that may prevent persons with disabilities from fully engaging and doing their job well.

Many organisations are familiar with the requirements for physical accessibility such as moving an entrance to an accessible location, adding ramps, widening doorways or adding an accessible toilet. Many of these measures will benefit the entire staff or the general public as well as the employee with a disability. Sometimes, accessibility improvements alone are not enough to address the individual needs of a particular employee who may need an accommodation or adjustment. And, sometimes a person's disability may not be visible, but they still may need a specific accommodation.

"Accessibility" and "accommodation" are different and, it is important that employers understand both. "Accessibility" looks at inclusive access to the physical environment, communications and technology responding to the general needs of all those in the workplace, whereas "accommodation" looks at customising or making adjustments to the job, workplace or work situation based on individual needs in relation to the job requirements.

To help your organisation create a more accessible workplace and to understand and implement accommodation as part of your recruitment and retention strategy for persons with disabilities, this guide will cover the following topics:

1



Basics of Accessibility and Universal Design

2



Benefits of Accessibility and Universal Design

3



Basics of Accommodation

4



Benefits of Accommodations

5



Cost of Accommodations

6



Employer and Employee Roles in the Accommodation Process

7



Putting an Accommodation Process in Place

8



Accommodations and Accessibility Features for Persons with Specific Disabilities

1. BASICS AND BENEFITS OF ACCESSIBILITY AND UNIVERSAL DESIGN

Accessibility, as defined by United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)¹, which Singapore ratified in 2013, means taking 'appropriate measures to ensure persons with disabilities (have) access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas. For example, by installing entrances with automated sliding doors, wheelchair users, children and elders with limited arm strength can enter without pushing or pulling door handles.

Accessibility is often linked to the concept of universal design. Universal design refers to 'products, environments, programmes and services (which) are designed to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design'². For example, computers which allow for increasing the font size without the need for specific software allow such computers to be readily used by those with poor vision, including aging workforce members.

Workplace Accessibility

Workplace accessibility is comprised of the following categories:

- i) Physical accessibility includes the main facilities and the built environment leading to and around the workplace, such as paths and routes from public transport nodes to the office, lighting and workplace safety measures. Employers should work with property owners or facility management offices to identify and improve facility accessibility for all visitors and staff.

- ii) Communications accessibility requires communication channels that can be used by everyone. For example, braille signs and materials may be needed for people who are blind. Those who are Deaf or hearing impaired may require sign language and closed captioning on videos. People with intellectual or learning disabilities may require specific or simplified language, signage or communication methods to better understand supervisor instructions or directions. It is advisable to check with the persons with disabilities to understand their preferred mode of communication. Not all people with hearing impairment know sign language and not all blind people read Braille.
- iii) Technology accessibility covers a wide spectrum from web information to software and hardware, which need to be accessible to all users, including persons with disabilities. For example, a user who is blind will not be able to watch a video embedded on a webpage. Therefore, the web developer may want to include a short description about the video or include voice captioning in the video. This enables the user to understand what the video is about via the help of the text-to-speech screen reader.

By applying the concept of universal design and accessibility, employers can address the needs of employees with disabilities, and also maximise its benefits and value to other staff as well.

Benefits of Accessibility and Universal Design

An accessible workplace encourages more people with disabilities to want to work in that environment, because there are fewer physical and communication barriers. An accessible workplace is also a more convenient and safe environment for all. Examples are accessible ramps designed for wheel chairs which make it easier for people moving equipment to navigate; clear, wide and unobstructed aisles also can prevent accidents by not only making it easier for a wheelchair user, but also for those with visual impairments.

ENABLING FACTS

The Singaporean Building and Construction Authority has released guidelines on universal design. Employers can visit <https://friendlybuildings.bca.gov.sg/> for more ideas and details.

Alternatively, employers can approach SPD (formally known as Society for the Physically Disabled) via their website <http://www.spd.org.sg/> to conduct a simple physical environment accessibility assessment.

For more information on communications and technology accessibility, please refer to the SG Enable Online HRM Series for Employers <http://employment.sgenable.sg/employers/online-hrm-series/> in the guide "Assistive Technology and e-Accessibility".

02

■ BASICS OF
ACCOMMODATION

2. BASICS OF ACCOMMODATION

According to the UNCRPD, reasonable accommodation is defined as “necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms”. A simplified definition³ of reasonable accommodation is to make changes in the work environment or existing work processes to enable persons with disabilities to:



Enjoy equal opportunity in the job application process



Perform the essential functions⁴ of the job (defined as basic, core job duties that an employee has to perform, with or without reasonable accommodation) which they are hired for or promoted to



Enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment



The key word to note is ‘reasonable’, as employers may have limited resources to meet the needs of persons with disabilities. Thus, accommodations are assessed to be reasonable when they

- (i) are able to assist persons with disabilities to perform essential functions,
- (ii) do not cause any undue hardship (e.g. excessive costs; extensive or prohibitive work redesign), and
- (iii) do not change the fundamental nature of the business due to the implementation⁵. For example, although flexible work arrangements pose little or no cost to the employer, the arrangement may not match with the business nature. It may not be possible for employers to implement flexible work arrangement for employees who are doing frontline service jobs in the retail line.



Examples of some accommodations that employers can consider include:



(i) Work processes and work hours

Employers can change the way work is processed and delivered based on the abilities of the persons with disabilities. For example, shorter working hours and fewer tasks can be assigned to an employee who returns to work after an accident to help build confidence and stamina before returning to the full work scope of essential functions on a full-time basis. However, employers need not remove the essential job functions and key deliverables of the job on a permanent basis.



(iv) Physical environment

Even when an environment meets accessibility requirements, adjustments may be required to meet individual needs in the workplace or workstation. For example, a person with autism may need a quieter area to work or a wheelchair user may need a workstation that is larger or has a higher desk.



(ii) Training delivery

People learn in different ways and at different speeds. Therefore, employers or training providers should review curriculum delivery and duration to ensure adequate knowledge transfer for all employees, including individuals with disabilities. For example, persons with intellectual disabilities might learn better with simpler instructions, short phrases, pictorial images incorporated into training materials and demonstrations of ways of approaching specific job tasks. Using a variety of training approaches helps everyone to learn better.



(iii) Work tools, assistive devices and changes to the work environment

Certain work tools are necessary to enable employees to perform their jobs more effectively. For example, cleaners use an automated floor cleaning machine to wash the floor; office workers need computers. Sometimes, specific assistive tools, devices or other changes to the existing tools and workplaces can help persons with disabilities do their work and do it more effectively. Examples are as simple as color coding a machine to make it easier for a person with an intellectual disability to operate it or to provide specific software for a blind person operating a computer. More information can be found in the SG Enable Online HRM Series for Employers <http://employment.sgenable.sg/employers/online-hrm-series/> in the guidebook "Assistive Technology and e-Accessibility".



(v) Performance and evaluation standards

Persons with disabilities should be expected to do the same job function as their peers and should be evaluated with the same performance standards as others. However, since the purpose of assessing performance is to measure an individual's abilities and skills and not their test-taking ability, some people with disabilities may benefit from accommodation to perform optimally. Employers could explore with the employees various techniques to get the needed information during assessment. For example, extended time could be given to individuals with motor difficulties or a test could be administered verbally for those who have writing difficulties. Such principles and measures should be considered in testing situations as part of the recruitment process as well.



(vi) Human Resource (HR) policies

Changes may need to be made to HR policies to accommodate employees with disabilities, and as noted, such accommodations may benefit all employees. For example, allowing flexi-time for employees with disability, due to medical appointments or transport schedules, will benefit all employees who may need such flexibility. These policies should be clearly communicated to all staff and reviewed regularly to ensure their relevance to the changing needs of employees with disabilities.

More examples for some of these accommodations will be discussed in the last section of the guide.

03

BENEFITS OF
ACCOMMODATION
FOR YOUR WORKFORCE

3. BENEFITS OF ACCOMMODATION FOR YOUR WORKFORCE

The U.S. Job Accommodation Network⁶, a service for employers and others on the issue of accommodation, has been conducting an on-going study on employers since 2004 and has interviewed a total of 2,744 employers as of 27 April 2020. The study found that employers experience multiple direct and indirect benefits after making accommodation. The most frequently mentioned direct benefits were

- 1) the accommodation allowed the company to retain a valued employee,
- 2) the accommodation increased the employee's productivity, and
- 3) the accommodation eliminated the costs of training a new employee.

The following case study illustrates three direct benefits when employers consider implementing accommodations at the workplace:

1

The accommodation was made for the employee with a disability and then found to benefit everyone (with or without disabilities).

2

The appropriate accommodation removed barriers to employment and advancement opportunities for employees with disabilities.

3

It equipped persons with disabilities with the ability to perform the essential job functions.



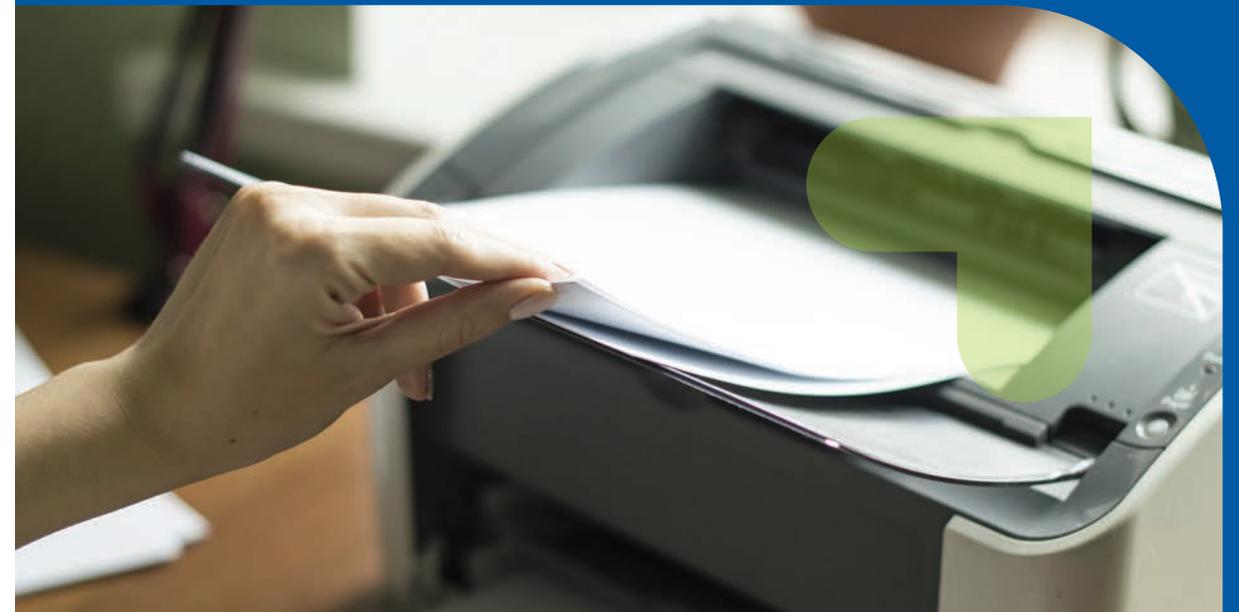
🔍 CASE STUDY

Susan, a wheelchair user, is a patient service officer in a hospital. Her essential job functions include registering patients, scheduling medical appointments and securing payment. The supervisor noticed that she was not serving as many customers as she is expected, rendering her productivity low with respect to the company's performance standard. A performance review meeting was set up to address the performance disparity and identify the reasons that she could not meet the standard.

As a result of the meeting, her supervisors learned that for every patient served, it took her extra time and effort as compared to her peers to get to and from the printer some distance away to collect the necessary documents to do her job.

To alleviate the difficulties she faced in performing the essential job functions, the supervisor decided to install a printer at her desk so that she was able to retrieve the printed documents more efficiently and without spending extra time to travel to and from the printer.

This simple accommodation resulted in a significant improvement in Susan's productivity. She even exceeded peer performance standards and she became more confident about her work performance. The success of this case is due to the willingness of the employer to have a direct conversation with the employee to better understand the problems faced by this employee and to provide reasonable accommodation to resolve them.



Benefits for all Employees (With and Without Disabilities)

As a result of this experience, the hospital management team decided to re-locate and install printers between desks, so that all counter staff could retrieve printed documents easily and serve patients more efficiently. This accommodation resulted in an increase in productivity and service quality across all the patient officers. What was originally meant as an accommodation for the employee with a disability eventually became a productivity improvement for everyone. Additionally, the attitudes and perceptions of some employees, who initially felt such accommodations provided a competitive advantage tool for their co-workers with disabilities, become generally more positive and supportive.

Employers should explain to all staff that the purpose of the accommodations is to enable employees with disabilities to fulfill the same essential job functions which employees without disabilities are doing, and highlight the potential benefits these accommodations can also bring to all.

Remove Barriers to Employment and Advancement Opportunities

What if, in the case above, the supervisor or management chose not to accommodate Susan? Susan might have felt demoralised by her low productivity and even want to leave the hospital. The organization would have lost a good employee and had to recruit and train someone else. If they were unwilling to make accommodations, they might have few or no persons with disabilities joining the hospital. The hospital could get a reputation for being unsupportive and lacking in diversity, which could impact the recruitment of employees with and without disabilities.

With reasonable accommodation and accessibility arrangements, persons with disabilities can enjoy equal employment and advancement opportunities, as they are able to work and compete on the same level playing field with their peers. In the case of Susan, she was empowered to work more independently, with management support. As a result, her productivity even surpassed her peers, which in the long run will aid in her career advancement.

Equip Persons with Disabilities to Perform Essential Functions

Essential job functions are basic, core job duties that an employee has to perform, with or without reasonable accommodations. Accommodations are meant to assist employees with disabilities to fulfill their essential job functions and responsibilities --- in other words to do the job for which they were hired. As noted, employers need not lower the performance standards but should explore possible accommodation options. In the case study, the management of the hospital did not immediately jump in to reduce Susan's workload or performance standards. Instead, they explored the possible adjustments to enable Susan to perform the essential tasks of a patient service officer, and still hold her to the same performance standards as her peers.

Besides these direct benefits, the U.S. Job Accommodation Network⁶ study also found some widely mentioned indirect benefits by employers who made accommodations for employees with disabilities; these included:



Improved interactions
among co-workers



Improved overall
morale among
all employees



Improved overall
productivity
among all employees

04

MISCONCEPTIONS
ABOUT
ACCOMMODATIONS

4. MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT ACCOMMODATIONS

Employers may assume that providing accommodations is costly and that only employees with disabilities request job accommodations. Neither is necessarily true. Accommodations need not involve large scale modifications or high costs. Some of the existing human resource (HR) policies (e.g., flexible hour work arrangement, telecommuting) can benefit all employees, as well as employees with disabilities and if no such policies are in place, they could be instituted for all.

A study in the U.S., conducted by Cornell University⁷, showed that 95 per cent of the accommodation requests came from persons without disabilities. It seems that many employers have been listening to requests and needs of their employees and making accommodations for staff without disabilities.

Another study⁸ to determine barriers to employment or advancement of persons with disabilities found that only 20 per cent of the employers perceived the cost of accommodations as a barrier to hiring persons with disabilities. Other barriers were found to be more significant, such as the lack of experience of persons with disabilities, the lack of qualified applicants with disabilities, and others.

The U.S. Job Accommodation Network⁶, conducted a study of employers, of which 776 gave cost information related to accommodations they had provided. A high 58 percent of employers (453 out of the 776) reported that when a person with a disability required an accommodation, there was no financial cost involved (e.g. flexible-hour work arrangements, extended training periods, regular brief rest periods, or even moving a workstation to a quieter corner to avoid triggers for persons with autism). Another 289 out of 776 employers (37 percent) experienced a one-time cost, and the average one-time expenditure by employers was SGD\$700. Only 25 out of the 776 employers surveyed (3.2 per cent) said the accommodation resulted in an ongoing, annual cost to the company.

The study results consistently showed that the benefits employers receive from making workplace accommodations far outweigh the low cost, and 75 percent of employers who had implemented accommodations said that the accommodations were either very effective or extremely effective.

In Singapore, 50 per cent of employers who have tapped the Open Door Programme reported that the cost of their accommodations is less than SGD\$1,000 on average. Costs can vary with the level and type of accommodations needed, however it is often possible to accommodate employees with disabilities for little or no cost.

Q ENABLING FACT

Under the Open Door Programme (ODP), employers can be supported with up to 90% of costs relating to workplace modification and purchase of assistive devices, capped at \$20,000 per employee with disability, whichever is lower. For further information on ODP, please log on to <https://employment.sgenable.sg/>.





QUIZ – REASONABLE OR NOT?



Case #1

Lilian has applied for an internship position. Lilian has a hearing impairment. During the process of an interview, she asks if the interview could be conducted using a computer, so that any questions and responses could be entered and read to facilitate communication.



Case #2

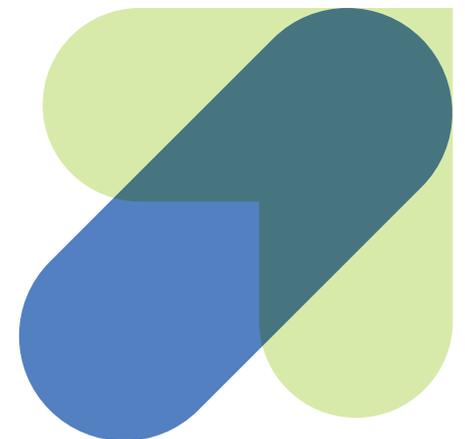
John has just returned to work after having a stroke. He works as a sales administration officer in backend office operations. Due to his stroke, and in spite of rehabilitation, he has reduced physical stamina and it is difficult for him to stay focused and work throughout the day. He asked to take frequent intermittent breaks (e.g. 15 minutes of break time per hour) so he can rest. He expects to need this accommodation for the next 6 months, until he builds up his stamina.



Case #3

Edward, who has low vision, is going to work as a call agent in a small company. He requests that his company purchase and install screen magnifying software to help enlarge all the data on screen i.e. including the mouse cursor, fonts, icons and notifications, without compromising on the screen resolution even at high magnification levels. This software will also help to adjust the colour contrast of the information on screen, customising it to the individual's preferred visual colours.

There are no right or wrong answers to these cases. The solution depends on the individual employers' available resources, company policies, and operational parameters, as well as through discussions and reviews done together with the supervisors, managers and employee with disability. It is also possible for employers to fulfill only a part of the accommodation requests or explore other options to allow employees to reach the desired work outcome. For example, for Case 3, instead of installing the screen magnifying software which may be costly, the employer could explore the options of providing a more cost-effective solution such as the use of the Microsoft or Macintosh in-built "Accessible" mode magnifier, or download magnifier freeware for magnifying on-screen data. Although these magnifiers may cause the information on-screen to be more pixelated (not maintaining the screen resolution), it is still a possible solution if the employee's use of the computer is minimal. More examples of reasonable accommodation will be offered later in this guide, illustrating possible accommodations relative to the type of disability a person may have.



05

EMPLOYERS' ROLE IN
THE ACCOMMODATION
PROCESS

5. EMPLOYERS' ROLE IN THE ACCOMMODATION PROCESS

The employer plays an important role in the accommodation process. Some of the important actions employers should take to facilitate the accommodation process (when needed) include the following:

- ✓ Conduct regular performance reviews and support meetings to understand the needs of all employees.
- ✓ Explore performance problems with the employee to determine if they need an accommodation.
- ✓ Explore performance problems with the employee to determine if they need an accommodation.
- ✓ Listen to employee requests for an accommodation with an open mind and an attitude to help resolve the difficulties. (Employer attitudes at such time will influence the employee's trust and perception.)
- ✓ Work with the employee to explore accommodation options, and together with the employee select the most effective solution.
- ✓ Avoid lowering performance expectations or compromising workplace safety or work quality; assess employees with disabilities on equal standards as other employees.

Employers need to create an open work culture which encourages employees to be forthcoming, open and frank when they require an accommodation, and engage employees to jointly identify solutions or accommodation as working partners.

After implementing the accommodation, it is important that the employers provide a feedback avenue for employees on the usage and the effectiveness of the accommodation in achieving the desired outcomes.



06

PUTTING AN
ACCOMMODATION
PROCESS IN PLACE

6. PUTTING AN ACCOMMODATION PROCESS IN PLACE

To ensure adequate support for employees with disabilities, employers should consider developing a policy and implementing a reasonable accommodation process which integrates into existing company policies. Some common examples include flexible work arrangements, job reassignment or back-to-work arrangements. For example, an employee who had a recent stroke and is still newly adjusting to his wheelchair may find it difficult to travel. The company could review his job scope and reassign job tasks that allow him to telecommute and work from home for a start, until he is comfortable to commute to the office.

The following components⁹ could be added to HR policies to assist with the reasonable accommodation process:

Centralised Accommodations Fund

A centralised fund is helpful to encourage more business units and line managers to provide accommodations. Through a centralized fund, managers can cover any costs of accommodations by tapping into the fund rather than the budget of their business unit. This will eliminate the financial disincentive to providing an accommodation on the part of the manager and could achieve economies-of-scale for the company, if the accommodation can be expanded to other units.

Designated Office or Person-In-Charge

The company should designate someone to be in charge of the accommodation process or procedures. This can be someone in the HR department who is ideally trained in disability awareness. Such a person would serve as a contact point for accommodation needs, help coordinate resources to explore, discuss, implement and evaluate the accommodations. The designated staff may sit in during any meeting to facilitate discussions, document conversations and information (e.g. name of requestor, type of disability, and the nature of accommodation) and provide advice or support as needed. Those involved in the accommodation process should be held to strict confidentiality requirements.

Internal and External Resource network

HR practitioners or work supervisors may lack knowledge pertaining to types of disabilities and accommodation options or available assistive devices. Therefore, it is recommended that companies build a support network of internal and external experts and resources. Members of a resource network could include voluntary welfare organisations, medical or safety professionals, job coaches (individuals who specialize in assisting individuals with disabilities to learn and accurately carry out job duties), technology experts or occupational therapists. With the agreement of the employee requesting an accommodation, these members of the resource network could be invited to join in accommodation discussions or consulted for advice.

Ongoing Feedback and Review

The process of getting feedback and doing reviews for the accommodation should be continuous and ongoing, starting from the early stages of exploration to implementation. The requestor should use the device or implement the accommodation for a period of time and provide feedback to the designated office and supervisor. Employers should also conduct regular performance reviews on the effectiveness of the accommodation. The purpose is to decide on the most effective accommodation that meets the needs of both the employee and business unit and to learn more for the future needs of other employees.

Internal Communication

Employers must clearly communicate to all staff about the policy and process of making accommodation requests. Such information should be included in the orientation of new employees and published through the company intranet and the employee handbook, or using whatever communication tools the company has in place. The policy and process can also be shared at the regular supervisory trainings. Such open communication sends a message to all staff that the management is supportive of making accommodations, and encouraging of staff to make their needs known, while assuring them of confidentiality.

07

ACCESSIBILITY FEATURES
AND ACCOMMODATIONS
FOR SPECIFIC DISABILITIES

7. ACCESSIBILITY FEATURES AND ACCOMMODATIONS FOR SPECIFIC DISABILITIES

These following charts suggest specific options of accessibility and accommodation measures for persons with (i) physical impairments, (ii) hearing impairments, (iii) visual impairments, (iv) intellectual disabilities and (v) those with autism spectrum disorder. The accessibility and accommodation examples are intended as illustrations; it is important that employers discuss and review the individual needs of their employees with the employee, the supervisor and manager.



7.1 Examples for Persons with Physical Impairment

Accessibility	Accommodations
Avoid placing items along the common walkway as it may obstruct wheelchair users	Install height-adjustable tables for a motorised wheelchairs
Allow a minimum width of 1.2m for the common aisle for a wheelchair user and a walking person to pass	Allocate workspaces near to office machines (e.g. printers) or entrances/exits for employee with mobility impairments
Retrofit company vehicles (e.g. shuttle bus) to cater to and ferry employees or visitors on wheelchairs	Adjust shelving units to be at wheelchair-accessible height
Install ramps with gentle gradients and handrails	Install devices and programmes that allow alternative access to computers such as trackballs, key guards and, compact keyboard
Provide accessible and wider parking spaces that are near to the car park lobby	Allow periodic breaks for toileting and repositioning
Equip toilets with proper emergency call bells, bidets, flip-up grab bars, vertical and horizontal hand-bars	



7.2 Examples for Persons with Hearing Impairment

Accessibility	Accommodations
Install industrial mirrors at blind spots or corners at warehouses or carparks so that possible dangers are evident for all but especially for those unable to rely on sounds to warn them while driving or walking	Sit in a round table setting to facilitate lip-reading
Ensure that fire safety systems have strobe lights to indicate fire alarm activation	Conduct group discussions in a quiet room to avoid distractions and minimize noise
Install hearing induction loop system in common areas or event halls. This enables those with hearing aids to be connected to the hearing loop mic system and focuses their audio channel exclusively to the event speaker, instead of picking up all other noises in the area which may be disruptive to them.	Educate staff to speak one at a time, maintain eye contact and not cover their mouth when speaking
	Provide any written materials such as meeting agendas, course or training outlines before meetings and meeting notes afterwards





7.3 Examples for Persons with Visual Impairment

Accessibility	Accommodations
Mount Braille characters on handrails of staircase to indicate floor level	Avoid placing items along the common walkway as it may disorientate employee's mental route map
Install voice announcement system in elevator	Install text-to-speech, screen reader software for computer use
Lay tactile flooring on paths leading to key areas such as entrances, emergency exits, washrooms and the staff canteen	Provide reading/training/meeting materials in advance for employees to review using their preferred method of reading (e.g., braille, large print, digitally)
Offer reading materials in alternate formats such as audiotape and Braille. Print documents in larger font size or in colour contrast	Purchase screen magnifier software* or hardware for employees with low vision or tunnel vision
Provide meaningful descriptions for every graphic used in online and web-based documents	Familiarise employee with the amenities within the company and around the building such as the facilities and floor plan by orientating and walking with them (orientation might take a few weeks)
Offer reading materials in alternate formats such as audiotape and Braille. Print documents in larger font size or in colour contrast	Purchase screen magnifier software* or hardware for employees with low vision or tunnel vision
Provide meaningful descriptions for every graphic used in online and web-based documents	
Install more lightings to improve area brightness	
Implement guidelines and best practices from World Wide Web Consortium to improve web content accessibility	
Install switches with large easy-touch rocker types	



7.4 Examples for Persons with Intellectual Disability

Accessibility	Accommodations
Block-off areas that might be dangerous to enter and label equipment or tools that have to be handled with care	To guide employees in the work processes, simplify Standard Operating Procedures by using checklists or step by step pictorial manual
Simplify written emergency response materials into simple language or pictures and ensure that employees understand what to do in an emergency	Provide frequent intermittent breaks for employees who may need conditioning and building up of stamina over time (might be useful for those with certain physical disabilities or for those returning to work as well)
Use pictures, videos, symbols and diagrams in training materials instead of long sentences or paragraphs (e.g., a picture of employee in full uniform to teach appropriate attire)	Use timer or time management application to help employee keep track of time
Make sure signage is clear and easy to understand	Use role-play/videos to demonstrate appropriate workplace behaviours
	Vary competency assessment methods to include multiple-choice questions, scenario role-play and on-site observations
	Provide additional training time or retraining if needed, to reinforce learning
	Provide quiet room or corner for staff who are more productive in a non-distracting environment
	Break down long work process into smaller tasks/steps



7.5 Examples for Persons with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Accessibility	Accommodations
Simplify written emergency response materials into simple language or pictures and ensure that employees understand what to do in an emergency	Avoid installing strong or colorful lighting that may cause sensory overload
Use pictures, videos, symbols and diagrams in training materials instead of long sentences or paragraphs (e.g., a picture of employee in full uniform to teach appropriate attire)	Provide noise canceling headsets to reduce background noises that may cause sensory overload
	Avoid changing processes too often or abruptly
	Use of voice recorder to capture instructions and information
	Allow written response in place of verbal response for those who prefer this communication method
	Allow employees' workstation to be positioned away from high human traffic or background noises (e.g., machine, equipment) if they request for it

ENABLING FACT

For additional information and examples, you can also refer to the US Job Accommodation Network website for more details: www.askjan.org or the Australian Job Access website, which provides information and support for employers: <https://www.jobaccess.gov.au/employers/available-support/211>

08

SELF-ASSESSMENT
CHECKLIST FOR
ACCESSIBILITY AND
ACCOMMODATIONS
AT THE WORKPLACE

8. SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST FOR ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATIONS AT THE WORKPLACE

Employers can use this self-assessment checklist as a guide to assess their workplace accessibility, reviewing the user experience from the external environment (outside and around the building) to the internal environment (office area accessibility). The checklist also reviews points on company culture which hinges on HR practices and various emergency evacuation considerations.

EMPLOYER'S SELF ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT

NO	SITE COMPONENT	YES/NO	GUIDELINES
1	Approach to Building		
A	Is there a clear path, free of hazards, leading to the main building?		
B	Is there an accessible pick-up and drop-off point close to the main entrance?		
C	Is the main entry door way wide enough for easy wheelchair access? (At least 850mm)		
2	Accessibility Around Building		
A	At right angle turns, are inside corners splayed or rounded to at least 300mm radius? (see Figure 1)		
B	Are floor surfaces slip-resistant with contrasting colour bands and detectable warning surfaces to alert users of the change in level?		
C	Are there detectable guardrails having its leading edge at or below 580mm from the floor level provided to warn of overhead hazards(headroom reduced to 200mm from floor level)? (see Figure 2)		
D	Are Tactile Ground Surface Indicators (TGSI) provided 300mm before hazards, steps and ramps?		Should be applied in a perpendicular direction which is at right angles to the line of approach or to target object
E	Does ramps around landings not adjacent to walls have an edge protection? (Figure 3)		Eg of edge protections i) kerb of minimum height of 75mm ii) a raised barrier or rail with bottom edge at 75mm or less from ramp or landing surface

NO	SITE COMPONENT	YES/NO	GUIDELINES
3	Internal Access of Building		
A	Do internal doors have a minimum clear width of more than 850mm?		
B	Is there a lift in the building?		
C	Is the lift accessible to every floor?		
D	Is the width of the lift door opening more than 900mm?		
E	Does the lift(s) have the following features: i) Braille and tactile markings provided to indicate lift buttons ii) Grab bars fixed in lifts		i) Recommended to be placed vertically or horizontally between 900 and 1200mm ii) Fixed at both sides and rear, placed between 800mm and 900mm from floor level
F	Is the door opening/closing interval long enough for the person to enter and exit the lift? (Doors remain open at least 3 seconds)		
G	Do ramps i) have a minimum width of 1200mm? ii) are not steeper than 1:12?		
H	Are handrails continuous throughout the entire length of ramps and extended at least 300mm at the end of a horizontal run? (Figure 4)		
4	Usage of Space		
A	Are there any wheelchair- friendly toilets in the building?		Refurbish at least one toilet with necessary facilities
B	Is there enough maneuvering space in the toilet?		Have minimum clear distance of 1750mm between opposite walls
C	Are there grab rails within the toilet and at appropriate locations?		At height of 800mm-810mm and a diameter of 30mm-40mm
D	Do operating mechanisms and controls have a clear floor space of at least 900mm by 1200mm?		Operating mechanisms include: i) Door handles, electrical socket outlets, switches Controls should be: ii) Located at a height of between 450-1200mm from floor level iii) Operable by one hand
E	Do seating spaces have a clear floor space of at least 900mm by 1200mm?		
F	Is there a clear knee space of at least 900mm wide, 480mm deep and 700mm high provided?		
G	Are hearing enhancement systems provided in meeting rooms and auditoriums?		
H	Can font sizes of text on the screen be adjusted?		
I	Is the general lighting level uniform and sufficient for people with low vision?		i) Using matte finishes on furnitures or walls ii) For general lighting, use fluorescent bulbs iii) To reduce glare on close-up work, ensure bulb is below eye level

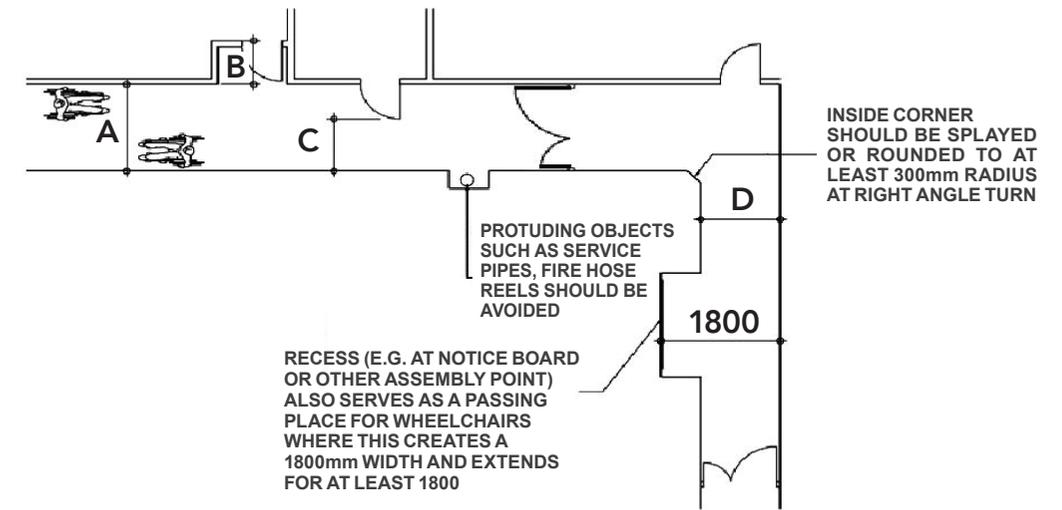
NO	SITE COMPONENT	YES/NO	GUIDELINES
5	Company Culture		
A	In advertising for jobs, was it highlighted that persons with disabilities are welcomed to apply?		
B	Is there a basic training system in place for all staff which consist of an evaluation checklist?		
C	Is there a mentor assigned to take care of employees with disabilities?		
D	Are managers and supervisors educated on the benefits and concerns of hiring people with disabilities?		
E	Does your company provide all new employees with disabilities information on flexible benefits available?		Eg) Alternative work schedules
F	Are assistive technology present to aid employees with disabilities manage their job scope?		Eg) Screen magnifiers, alternative keyboards
G	Does your company incorporate different types of training such as visual and audio for persons with disabilities to comprehend?		
6	Emergency Evacuation		
A	Are toilets equipped with the emergency alarm do the alarms work?		
B	Are the doors lockable from inside and unlockable from outside in an emergency situation?		Install two-way lock system
C	Does your emergency evacuation plan include employee using a wheelchair?		Staff should be trained to assist and to direct people with disabilities to accessible exits or areas of refuge (e.g., how to assist someone using an evacuation chair).
D	Are emergency exits accessible to a person using a wheelchair?		
E	Is there an evacuation chair available for a person using a wheelchair ?		
F	Is there a clear path, free of hazards, leading to the assembly point?		

Source: SG Enable Ltd

Reference:

1. <https://friendlybuildings.bca.gov.sg/industry-professional-ud-code-on-accessibility-in-the-built-environment.html>
2. Sample Facilities Audit
3. Asian Women's Welfare Association (AWWA) TM Integration Services, in collaboration with SNEF checklist

FIGURE 1



- A. A CLEAR WIDTH OF 1500mm WILL ALLOW TWO WHEELCHAIR USERS TO PASS EACH OTHER.
 - B. DEPTH OF RECESS SHOULD NOT BE LESS THAN THE WIDTH OF THE DOOR LEAF.
 - C. 900mm CLEAR SPACE WHERE DOORS OPEN INTO A CORRIDOR.
 - D. A CLEAR WIDTH OF CORRIDOR SHOULD NOT BE LESS THAN 1200mm
- * ALL DIMENSIONS ARE IN mm

FIGURE 2

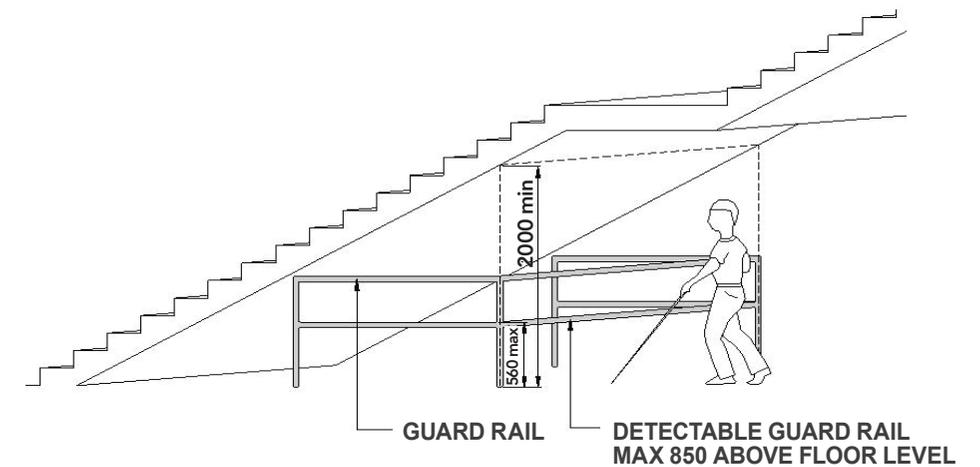
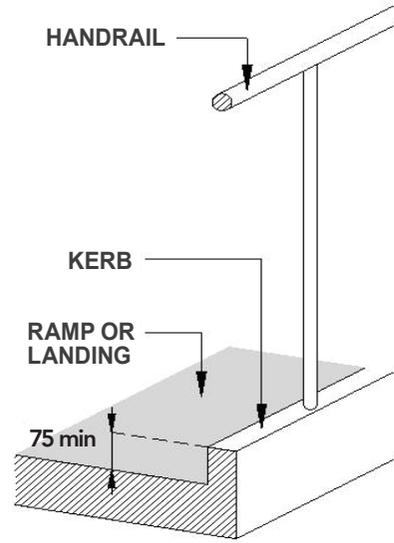


FIGURE 3

a) Kerb



b) Raised barrier

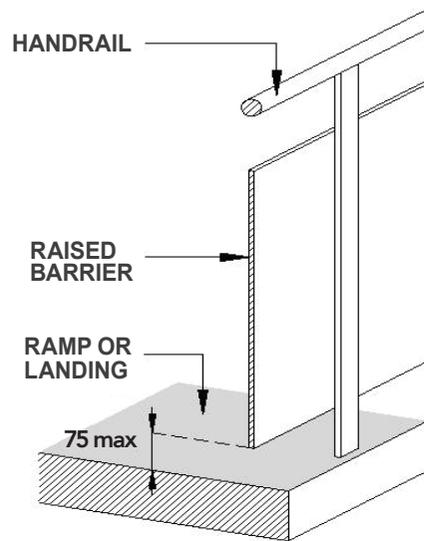
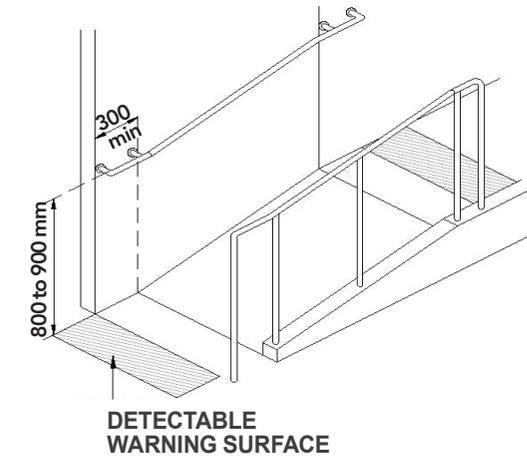
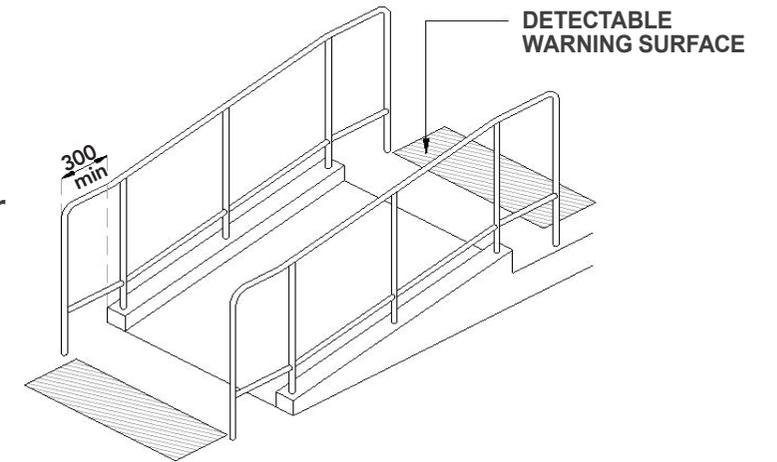


FIGURE 4

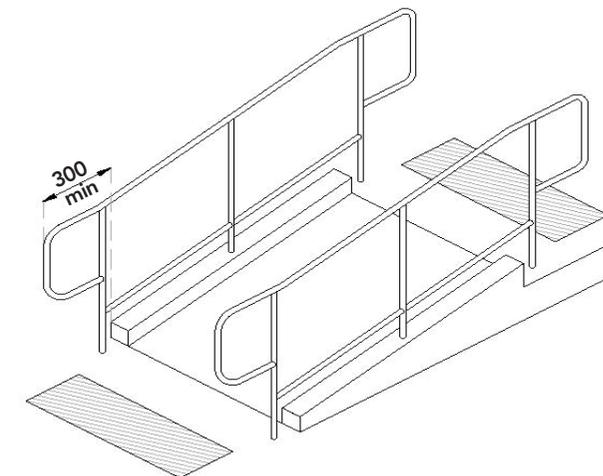
a) Handrail returns to wall



b) Handrail returns to floor



c) Handrail returns to post





CONCLUSION

Recruitment of persons with disabilities is the first step to being inclusive. Integrating and maintaining employees with disabilities at the workplace is an on-going journey, and it is essential for employers to make accessibility adjustments and reasonable job accommodation in the workplace and through HR policies. Whilst the workplace could be made accessible for everyone (including employees with disabilities), it is critical for employers to take a further step to discuss and review the individual needs of their employees with disabilities and make reasonable job accommodations, if needed, so that people with disabilities can fulfill their roles as productive and contributing employees.

For more in depth information, you may wish to attend SG Enable High Impact Retention & Employment (HIRE) Workshop series.

Recruitment
& Hiring of
Persons with
Disabilities

Career
Advancement
& Retention of
Persons with
Disabilities

Job
Accommodation
& Workplace
Accessibility

Enhancing
Employment
through
Assistive
Technology &
e-Accessibility

Introduction to Disability Management

Please refer to <http://employment.sgenable.sg/training/training-programmes/> for the training courses for different stakeholders and <https://employment.sgenable.sg/employers/get-trained/> for more information on employers training.



REFERENCES

- ^{1,2,5} U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; available from [here](#)
- ³ EEOC Enforcement Guidance on Reasonable Accommodation and Undue Hardship under the Americans with Disabilities Act; available from <https://www.eeoc.gov/policy/docs/accommodation.html>
- ⁴ SG Enable Online HRM Series for Employers: Recruitment and Hiring; available from <http://employment.sgenable.sg/employers/online-hrm-series/>
- ⁶ Accommodation Network (Original 2005, Updated 2007, Updated 2009, Updated 2010, Updated 2011, Updated 2012, Updated 2013, Updated 2014, Updated 2015, Updated 2019). Workplace accommodations: Low cost, high impact. Retrieved 22 Apr 2020, from https://askjan.org/topics/costs.cfm?csSearch=2568313_1
- ⁷ Erickson, W. von Schrader, S., Xu, X., & Bruyère, S. (2014). Accommodation requests: Who is asking for what. *Rehabilitation Research, Policy and Education*, 28 (2), 329-344.
- ^{8,9} Erickson, W. von Schrader, S. Bruyère, S & Sara VanLooy, S. (2013) The Employment Environment: Employer Perspectives, Policies, and Practices Regarding the Employment of Persons with Disabilities. *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin*



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