

THE REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION PROCESS

Maintaining one's job is an important goal in our society. Having a dependable source of income, the availability of benefits for you and your family, and working toward a secure retirement are objectives that many employees share within the City. However, what would happen if you became ill or sustained an injury that prevented you from performing the full range of your duties? Unfortunately, each year many City employees are faced with the possibility of losing their jobs because of illness or disability.

Employees with disabilities or who become disabled do have legal rights at both the State and Federal level with regard to their employment. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a qualified employee may request "reasonable accommodation" in order to maintain their employment with the City. Reasonable accommodation may include modifications to the work area, job restructuring, a change in the employee's work schedule, reassignment to a vacant position, or the provision of special tools or equipment in order to perform the work. Unless the disability is obvious, the employee generally must advise the City that an accommodation is needed.

It is important to keep in mind that when seeking an accommodation or job transfer, the employee must be "otherwise qualified" meaning that the person must first possess the education or certifications required for the job. Additionally, the employee must be able to perform the essential functions of the position with or without reasonable accommodation. The law also provides that an employer may reject a request for reasonable accommodation if it presents an undue hardship on the employer's business or is too costly to implement.

The following chart from the Thompson Publishing Group illustrates the reasonable accommodation process. This chart outlines the steps in the reasonable accommodation process which includes determining the job's essential functions; consulting with the employee with a disability to determine his or her abilities and needs; identifying potential accommodations in consultation with the employee; and selecting the best accommodation.

The fact that an employee's disability may be the result of a job related injury makes no difference in this process. All requests for reasonable accommodation are reviewed equally.

The City of Fresno recognizes that its work force is an important investment. If you become disabled or believe that you need reasonable accommodation in order to continue performing your job, we encourage you to contact the Personnel Services Department at 621-6900 in order to learn more about this process. The Risk Management staff is available to work with you and your Department to discuss your needs so that you may continue to enjoy the benefits of your job.

Reasonable Accommodation Process

This chart outlines the steps in the reasonable accommodation process, which includes:

- Determining the position's essential functions.
- Consulting with the employee with a disability to determine his/her abilities and needs.
- Identifying potential accommodations in consultation with the employee.
- Selecting the best accommodation.

(***The City** refers to The City of Fresno as an employer)

