



## **Employment Accommodations for People Who Use Wheelchairs and other Mobility Aids**

People who use wheel chairs (and other mobility aids such as canes and walkers), regardless of their education and expertise, are less likely to be employed in their chosen field than their non-disabled counterparts. The high rate of unemployment in this population has created a pool of available expertise in our community. With reasonable accommodation made to the workplace employers can tap into the rich resources provided by this group of people. Once someone has been offered a job, begin getting the required accommodations in place as it may take some time. Consult the individual and make sure that the employee's manager or supervisor understands the agreed accommodations.

Build in regular reviews of accommodations, e.g. at the end of the probationary period, in supervision sessions and in appraisals to ensure that the accommodations are still effective. Ensure that you take the same approach to accommodations when the employee applies for promotion, again not making assumptions about what the employee can or cannot do.

People who use mobility aids are not all the same, and any accommodations required will vary from person to person. The most important single accommodation many organizations need to make concerns attitudes and assumptions:

- ensure that you have a clear, credible and well communicated disability policy.
- ensure that training on managing disability and disability awareness training is provided regularly.

### **Orientation and Training**

Whether the employee is returning to work or starting work for the first time, ensure they have a thorough orientation:

- be sensitive. Ensure that the orientation and training sessions are located in fully accessible facilities, with fully accessible equipment. Freedom of movement, either independently or with support, is necessary.
- provide support in team building and ice-breaking activities that are appropriate and do not require participation that excludes the employee who uses a mobility device.

- provide training and resources to equip the individual to perform their role.

### **Working Arrangements to Retain Employees**

- allow flexible working hours and working arrangements. For example, perhaps a later start and finish time to allow for travel and transportation considerations.
- allow the employee extra time to carry out certain tasks where appropriate.
- provide equipment (if necessary) to help the employee negotiate their environment effectively.
- make changes to the work environment to ensure complete accessibility, this may include adaptations to work stations, common areas, washrooms and parking facilities.
- this list is not exhaustive and will not apply equally to people. You will need to explore other reasonable adjustments in consultation with your employee.

Following is a brief list of useful resource links for employers wishing to increase their capacity to recruit, employ, and retain employees who use mobility aids:

#### **Information:**

accessWORKS: <http://www.accessworks.ca>

BC Rehab: <http://www.bcrehab.com>

Neil Squire Society:

<http://www.neilsquire.ca/section.asp?catid=122&subid=128>

WorkSafe BC: <http://www.worksafebc.com>

#### **Assistive Technology and Physical Accommodations:**

Neil Squire Solutions (workplace accommodations & assistive technology):

<http://solutions.neilsquire.ca/>

North Shore Disability Resource Centre (equipment technicians):

<http://www.nsdrc.org/programs.htm#equip>

#### **Hiring:**

WorkAble Solutions (Employer Resources):

[https://www.workablesolutionsbc.ca/site/workable\\_solutions/resources/emp\\_index.asp](https://www.workablesolutionsbc.ca/site/workable_solutions/resources/emp_index.asp)

WorkSafe BC:

[http://www.worksafebc.com/claims/rehab\\_and\\_rtw/vocational\\_rehabilitation\\_services/hire\\_a\\_worker/default.asp](http://www.worksafebc.com/claims/rehab_and_rtw/vocational_rehabilitation_services/hire_a_worker/default.asp)

