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Civilian Personnel  
SUPERVISOR'S GUIDE TO EMPLOYMENT OF THE HANDICAPPED

INDEX

FOREWORD	.....	ii
CHAPTER 1	EMPLOYING THE HANDICAPPED .....	1-1
CHAPTER 2	HOW ARE HANDICAPPED PERSONS APPOINTED? .....	2-1
CHAPTER 3	REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION .....	3-1
SUMMARY	.....	3-3

FOREWORD

It is the policy of the Department of the Army and Fort Sam Houston to insure that handicapped individuals receive full and fair consideration in the recruitment, advancement and retention processes concerning positions for which they are qualified.

The efforts of Fort Sam Houston in the employment of the handicapped have been particularly noteworthy and management officials may be justifiably proud of what has been achieved. The Department of the Army is currently extending the scope and emphasis accorded programs designed to obtain a workforce that reflects the diversity of the American citizenry. Programs promoting employment of the handicapped and disabled figure prominently in the quest for such a workforce.

People working with selective employment programs know the personal satisfaction that stems from prudent and successful placements. It is not difficult to become deeply committed to programs of this nature but, to be effective, knowledge is needed of Civil Service rules, policies, procedures, responsibilities and authorities which pertain to selective placement programs. The Army's program coordination scheme has served to delegate to the installation level selective placement coordination responsibilities. At Fort Sam Houston the responsibility for coordinating such programs is vested in the Chief, Recruitment and Placement Branch, Civilian Personnel Office. For further information or assistance regarding the concerns of this pamphlet contact the Civilian Personnel Office at 221-2164.

This pamphlet is intended as a guide to supervisors and managers in the recruitment, advancement and retention of handicapped individuals. It is hoped that this pamphlet will demonstrate to management the value of handicapped individuals and their potential for meaningful contribution to the mission of the Department of the Army. Familiarity with the contents of this pamphlet will enable a manager to effectively work with personnelists and counselors relative to selective placements. More importantly managers may be equipped with the knowledge, attitudes and perceptions sufficient to initiate placements in furtherance of Army's quest.

Issue of supplements to this regulation by subordinate commanders is prohibited, unless specifically approved by Headquarters, Fort Sam Houston

Where masculine pronouns are used, it is the intent to include the feminine gender.



H. B. BUCKLEY, JR.  
Civilian Personnel Officer

## CHAPTER 1

EMPLOYING THE HANDICAPPED

Who are the Handicapped? For purposes of general employment, a handicapped individual is defined as any person who:

- Has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of such person's major life activities,

- Has a record of such an impairment, or

Is regarded as having such an impairment.

There are essentially three types of work disabilities:

Physical handicaps, both visible and non-visible, which could include the following disabilities: deafness, blindness, missing extremities, paralysis, or convulsive disorders.

Mental handicaps - either mental illness or mental retardation.

Related handicaps which are now legally defined as working handicaps, such as alcoholism and drug abuse.

Also included in Department of the Army's program for hiring, placement and advancement of the handicapped are disabled veterans.

Handicapped Workers Do Make Good Employees. If an impaired person can do a job in a satisfactory manner, then, insofar as the job is concerned, he is not handicapped.

Physical and mental limitations of different kinds and in varying degrees can be found in any person or group of persons. A person possessing muscular strength may work well as a laborer, yet that same person may not do well at electronics assembly where fine motor dexterity is necessary. As far as a handicap is concerned, if a person is properly placed in the correct job, there is no handicap.

Many individuals who have impairments compensate for their impairments by using those faculties not affected by the disability. In fact, the longer the individual has had the impairment, the more likely he will be to have developed unaffected faculties.

It is known, for example, that blind people sometimes develop better hearing than those with normal sight. This allows the blind person to interpret sounds so accurately that he is able to understand and do those things that cause problems for sighted people. In jobs where such sensitivity is necessary, the blind person does extremely well.

Persons with total hearing loss develop marked powers of concentration. With the new techniques for teaching deaf persons their abilities in

manual communication and lip reading, they can work in almost any type of employment that does not require the use of the telephone, extensive contacts with the public, or in which the inability to hear could be hazardous.

Individuals in wheelchairs because of one of many injuries to the spine develop arm and hand strength, dexterity and sensitivity. In areas where only the use of the arms and hands is required, they will often excel over individuals with complete mobility.

Matching of abilities with job requirements can be the same as for any other employee. It is necessary, though, that the individual placing a handicapped person look more at the person's abilities rather than inabilities. Also, it may be necessary to make reasonable accommodations for placing the handicapped person.

Once the handicapped person is ready for employment, it is then necessary to find jobs suited to the particular handicap. Because the supervisor has countless other problems to worry about, it is necessary that suitable workers be referred for employment in order not to create further problems for the manager or the handicapped individual. As the supervisor is able to see how well the handicapped person performs, those negative attitudes seen in the past begin to change.

## CHAPTER 2

HOW ARE HANDICAPPED PERSONS APPOINTED?

Handicapped persons may be, and frequently are, appointed to competitive service position through the same process as individuals without limitations

Selective placement programs are designed to facilitate the appointments of individuals who cannot compete successfully through established competitive processes for non meritorious reasons; for example, some individuals through no fault of their own are at a disadvantage based on factors that are not job related. Some individuals may not have access to buildings where examinations are conducted, or they may have hearing or sight losses that are not compatible with testing techniques. A major obstacle in obtaining employment sometimes stems from attitudinal barriers artificially imposed by employers. Whenever any factor not job related prevents to a significant degree the pursuit of employment, the use of selective placement programs and excepted appointment authorities are warranted. Additionally, Civil Service officials are tasked with the responsibility for removing some such barriers that are ostensibly job related. The removal of such barriers will be discussed in generic terms in Chapter 3, Reasonable Accommodations.

The Selective Placement Program Coordinator determines when an individual is hindered in his search for employment by physical or medical concerns. In such cases the normal competitive process may be by-passed and direct consideration for employment may be granted.

Attitudinal barriers usually manifest themselves in employers who are reluctant to hire handicapped persons for fear they will not be able to perform on the job efficiently or safely or fit in and be accepted by the existing workforce.

In response to these concerns, a special non-competitive appointing authority has been made available - a 700-hour temporary trial appointment. Under this provision, temporary appointments may be made to regular continuing (permanent) positions. The 700 hours (approximately four months) is usually long enough for handicapped persons to show how well they can perform, or conversely, the supervisor will have been able to observe any evidence of unsatisfactory performance, in which case the appointment is terminated. On or before completion of the 700-hour appointment, the supervisor may request that the temporary appointment be converted to a permanent excepted appointment. This will lead to acquisition of career status after satisfactory completion of one year trial period, plus an additional year of satisfactory service. There is no grade restriction for appointments made under this authority. A fringe benefit to supervisors is the fact that this type appointment may serve as a "quick fill" of a position.

In addition to the 700 hour appointments mentioned above there are other management tools for employing disabled individuals who are

also veterans. Disabled veterans who served during the Viet Nam era may be considered for and appointed to positions GS-7 or WG-7 and below. The avenue for employment as an exception to normal competitive processes is not limited to veterans with disabilities but may be used as a mechanism to facilitate the hiring of disabled veterans. Eligibility requirements for appointments (VRA) of this type are more lax for veterans with documented limitations.

In addition to the VRA program, veterans who have a compensable service connected disability of 30% or more are eligible for noncompetitive temporary appointments without grade restrictions of one year or less. Temporary appointment of this nature may be made to continuing positions. Any such veteran may be converted from a temporary appointment to permanent status if the temporary appointment was not, at the outset, limited to less than sixty calendar days.

#### How Do Other Handicapped Individuals Become Permanent Employees?

On or before the ending date of the 700-hour trial appointment, the appointment may be converted to an excepted appointment as mentioned above. A special appointing authority provides for identifying specific positions in which the duties of the job to be performed and work environment can be matched with a particular handicap. Under this procedure there are two ways by which the handicapped person may be given a permanent excepted appointment.

a. The first has to do with conversion of the appointee's temporary trial appointment to an excepted appointment. Appointees must have clearly shown that they are able to carry out the duties of the position while on the temporary trial appointment. Prior to the completion of the trial appointment, recommendation for conversion to a permanent appointment or termination may be requested.

b. The second permits a direct excepted authority appointment without a prior temporary trial appointment. Under this procedure, either a State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency or the Veterans Administration must provide certification concerning the proposed appointee's ability to perform in the concerned position.

Although the authority to make the initial appointment a permanent appointment exists, the Department of the Army's policy is to use the trial appointment when practical. The trial appointment, although not mandatory or always advisable, usually serves to remove any artificial or erroneous attitudes about employing the handicapped. In addition to the advantages the trial appointment provides, the Selective Placement Program Coordinator may solicit the help and expertise of rehabilitation counselors in determining the appropriateness of a placement. Managers who participate in this program by using the trial appointment procedure

have the assistance of the Coordinator and other concerned professionals in assessing the success of the trial appointment.

Appointment Eligibles. In order to be considered for a temporary trial appointment or an excepted appointment, it is the policy of this office to obtain certification from a State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency or the Veterans Administration. The certification will be based on an analysis by a counselor in conjunction with a Civilian Personnel Office representative.

The certification must state, in the opinion of the counselor, that the handicapped applicant is physically capable of handling the duties of the position without harm to himself or others.

The certification should also have supporting medical documentation which reflects the nature and extent of the disability and documentations regarding worksite compatability such as:

- a. The ability of the proposed appointee to do the job, based on such factors as training, education, and previous job performance.
- b. Any recommendations of job modifications and duty assignments, if needed.
- c. Any recommendations for work-site modifications, if needed
- d. Limitations of the proposed appointee which would affect work in the position.
- e. Other information concerning the proposed appointee which would be helpful in assuring a successful placement.

A physical examination by the employing activity to determine physical qualifications should not be confused with medical documentation reflecting the nature of the disability. Under the special appointing authority, limitations should be described to determine the actual condition of the applicant.

What About Promotions and Reassignments? Persons serving under these excepted appointments may apply for reassignment and promotion IAW local procedures, provided that physical qualification requirements and work environments are compatible and experience and/or education requirements are met.

Although prior approval from management is not necessary for promotions or reassignments, managers of the handicapped employees may work to coordinate these actions with the Civilian Personnel Office to assure selective placement factors are considered. The Civilian Personnel Office is available for assistance to the employee and the supervisor concerned.

## CHAPTER 3

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

A very basic concept in affirmative action and nondiscrimination and therefore selective placement is reasonable accommodation. This installation is required to make reasonable accommodation to the physical and mental limitations of a qualified handicapped applicant or employee unless that accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the operation of its program. Reasonable accommodation includes such actions as making facilities accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities, job restructuring, part-time or modified work schedules, acquisition or modification of equipment or devices, adjustment or modification of examinations, and providing readers for blind persons and sign language interpreters for deaf persons.

For purposes of reasonable accommodation, affirmative action, and non-discrimination, handicapped individuals must be qualified for the employment they seek. With reasonable accommodation - or without it if it is not needed - they must be able to perform essential functions of the job safely.

Accommodation through Modification. For placement purposes, it is desirable to find out how specific aspects of the work setting are likely to affect the individual. For example, what about noise, the speed with which work is to be done, repetitive operations, the variety of tasks, the degree of supervision (close, moderate, or little), and the quality of supervision (gentle or firm). It is also important to know whether the individual prefers to be alone, around people some of the time, or with people all the time and whether he or she prefers to work inside or outside, day or night, part-time or full time. Because of the many variables involved, it is unlikely that anyone's job will be a perfect fit emotionally. Still a common sense evaluation of preferences can be helpful in avoiding unnecessary difficulties.

Occasionally, job modification may be necessary. Requirements will be different in each case. Possibilities include:

- a. reducing noise levels by placing the employee in a smaller, more isolated work area;
- b. distributing workloads evenly among individuals to eliminate the stress of peak demands;
- c. limiting the number of people the individual must deal with;
- d. making sure that supervision and lines of authority are well-defined so that ambiguity and uncertainty are minimal.

FSH Pam 690-12

Mentally restored individuals may have special needs that must be considered when they are employed; however, most not only feel they are ready for work but also have been deemed ready by medical and vocational specialists. They are able and willing to perform well, and selecting officials should have confidence in them. Furthermore, mental health professionals are available if assistance is needed to help a restored person succeed.

SUMMARY

Success in this area of affirmative action is contingent upon joint efforts among the Selective Placement Coordinator, other members of the Civilian Personnel Officer's staff and selecting officials.

The Selective Placement Coordinator is charged with certifying the technical accuracy of the processes and stages of employing disabled citizens. Selecting officials are charged with developing an awareness and understanding of the needs of the Department of the Army and how those needs coincide with the needs of disabled citizens.

It is hoped that this pamphlet has helped develop the required awareness.

The following is furnished as a simplified guide as to the steps usually undertaken in the process of hiring eligible individuals:

Discussion of this source as a viable recruiting option

A job site analysis by TRC and CPO specialists to determine relevant specifics.

Recommendations and discussion as to possible job or job site modification.

Certification by TRC or VA specialist that a specified eligible is capable of performing in the concerned position and is physically qualified to do the work without hazardous consequences.

Coordination of the accomplishment of the necessary documentation to effect a trial appointment.

Observations as to performance and suitability during the trial period.

Recommendation for conversion to permanent appointment after successful trial period.

Continuation of cooperation between Personnelist and supervisor on all personnel matters particular to the appointee.

Conversion to a career conditional appointment after two years of successful performance.

As indicated by your Commander's support statement, all managers should recognize the importance of the Department of Army's concern in this regard and should assist in providing opportunities for disabled citizens to become a part of the Department of Army workforce.

FSH Pam 690-12

The proponent office of this pamphlet is the Civilian Personnel Office. Users are invited to send comments and suggested improvements on DA Form 2028 (Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms) to the Commander, Fort Sam Houston, ATTN: AFZG-CP, Fort Sam Houston, TX 78234.

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