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## Policy and Procedure # 605

### **Reasonable Accommodation**

Approval: \_\_\_\_\_ Effective Date: 5/9/24

#### POLICY:

Exceptional Foresters Inc. (EFI) is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to ensure equal employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. A reasonable accommodation is any change in the work environment or how a job is performed that enables a person with a disability to enjoy equal employment opportunities. This can be adjustments or changes to a job, work environment, policy, practice, or procedure.

#### PROCEDURE:

##### Requesting Reasonable Accommodation:

You can make a reasonable accommodation (RA) request during the application process, after a job offer, or at any time during employment. The request can come from yourself or by a representative (ex: spouse). Employers may ask, but cannot require, you to submit the request in writing.

HR may also send you a RA packet to you without you specifically requesting for RA. Since both State and Federal law require your employer to reasonably accommodate the known disabilities of employees, saying something such as "I have just been diagnosed with cancer" or "I broke my arm" will trigger the RA process.

You should request RA when you feel that you have a physical, mental, or sensory impairment(s) that is medically cognizable or diagnosable and affects your ability to perform the essential functions of your position.

##### Types Of accommodations:

There are many different forms of accommodations. Below are some basic types:

- Job restructuring - eliminating marginal functions.
- Modified work schedule - part-time or flexible hours.

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- Modified workplace - installing a power door
- Equipment - purchasing/modifying existing equipment.
- Reassignment - reassign to a vacant position if the employee is qualified and the position has similar pay and status.

EFI is obligated to provide reasonable accommodations that afford employees with disabilities equal employment opportunities. If more than one equally effective accommodation is identified, your agency will provide the accommodation that best fits the employee's needs and the work environment.

Employees are not required to accept the reasonable accommodation being offered to them. If an employee declines, the reasonable accommodation process will end, and they will return to work in their current position and be expected to perform the essential functions of their job without reasonable accommodation.

#### **Medical Documentation:**

If you request a reasonable accommodation, you may be asked to provide the following information:

- Verification that you have the disability claimed.
- Verification that the disability limits work.
- Description of the limitations of the disability.
- Anticipated duration of the need for the accommodation and.
- Assessment of the effectiveness of an accommodation.

#### **Determining Reasonable Accommodation:**

HR consults with the supervisor and the employee if the disability:

- Precludes the employee from performing job functions.
- Substantially limits the individual's ability to perform their job.
- Is reasonably likely to substantially limit the individual's ability to perform their job without reasonable accommodation.

The consulting group undertakes the following actions, as appropriate:

- Evaluation of the employee's functional abilities and limitations.
- Analysis of the job requirements.
- Exploration of reasonable accommodation options available to enable the employee to perform the job's functions, including but not limited to:
  - I. Making existing facilities used by employees readily accessible to be used by the employee with an impairment or impairments.
  - II. Restructuring the job in a manner consistent with reasonable accommodation.

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- III. Granting a leave of absence in a manner consistent with the law.
  - IV. Modifying work schedules in a manner consistent with the law.
  - V. Acquiring or modifying equipment or devices in accordance with the law.
  - VI. Providing qualified readers and interpreters.
  - VII. Reviewing current vacancies within the department; and/or
  - VIII. Providing the opportunity for reassignment to an active vacant position.
- Determination of the most effective reasonable accommodations.
  - Evaluation concerning whether or not the employee can perform the job in a manner safe to others and the employee.

For any questions concerning the nature of the limitation or a reasonable accommodation being considered, the employee and/or the supervisor should consult with HR. HR may also consult with other knowledgeable sources. All parties must engage in the reasonable accommodation process in such instances.

#### **Undue Hardship Limitation:**

EFI must provide reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with disabilities who are employees or applicants for employment unless doing so imposes an undue hardship. However, before concluding that a particular accommodation would impose an undue hardship, EFI must consider whether or not there are alternative reasonable accommodations that would not impose such a hardship.

**Note:** Determinations of *undue hardship* may be made only by the Executive Director and Department Director after consultation with HR. Such determinations must be documented in writing with the appropriate signatures.

#### **Confidentiality:**

Medical documentation and information about the reasonable accommodation process will be maintained securely, apart from personnel files. Information about an employee's disability will only be shared on a need to know basis.

If you have any questions or want to request a reasonable accommodation, please contact your HR department.