



Reasonable? For Whom

Summary:

This guide explores how “reasonable accommodation” in employment is often shaped by employer interpretation, risk avoidance, and internal politics rather than employee needs. It examines the intersection of medical disability, social disability, and workplace adjustments, showing how vague definitions can sideline inclusion.

Highlights:

- **Intersecting Realities:** Medical disability (clinical), social disability (barriers), and accommodations (workplace adjustments).
- **Decision Roles:** Employees share needs; doctors recommend; employers decide; disputes go to judges/commissions.
- **The “Reasonable” Gap:** Employees seek fairness; employers may choose minimal or no change; organizational priorities often override lived experience.
- **Hidden Interests:** Fear of blame leads to denials disguised as organizational consensus.
- **Impact:** Vague refusals reinforce exclusion and avoidance.
- **Recommendations:** Improve transparency, train managers in inclusive risk management, clarify “reasonable” legally, and strengthen enforcement.

Key Message:

True inclusion requires workplaces to act reasonably in practice, not just on paper. Fear and hidden decision-making undermine genuine accommodation.

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