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*Disabilities
Etiquette
Handbook*

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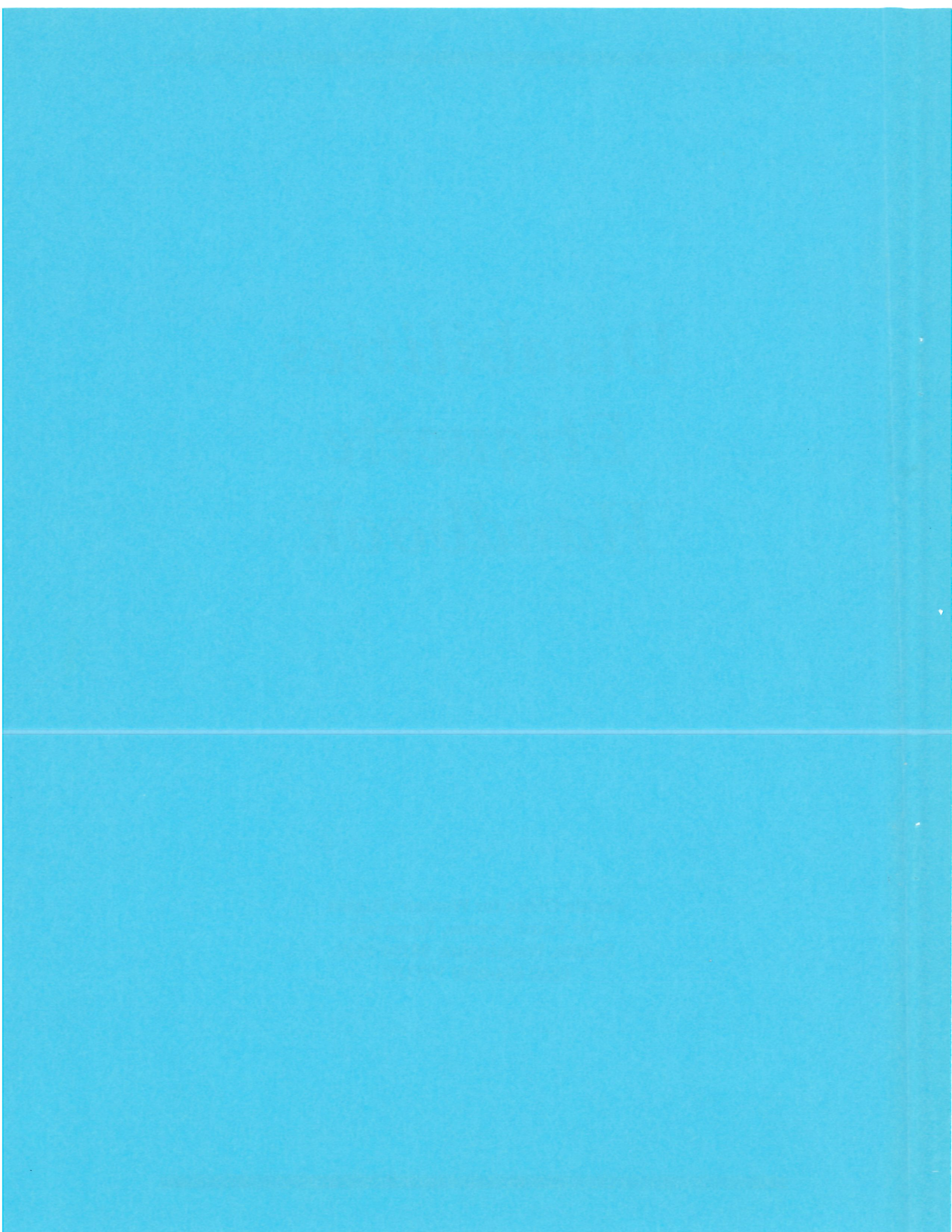


TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE	i
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES	1
DISTINCTION BETWEEN DISABILITY/HANDICAP	1
AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT	1
I. Employment	2
II. Public Accommodations	3
III. State and Local Government Operations	4
IV. Telecommunications Relay Devices	4
REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS IN THE WORK PLACE	4
RECEPTION ETIQUETTE	5
CONVERSATION ETIQUETTE	6
INTERVIEWING SCHEDULING ETIQUETTE	7
INTERVIEWING TECHNIQUE ETIQUETTE	8
INTERVIEWING COURTESIES FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION	9
Interviewing Persons Using Mobility Aids	9
Interviewing Persons with Vision Impairments	9
Interviewing Persons with Speech Impairments	9
Interviewing Persons who are Deaf or Hearing Impaired	10
DISABILITY RESOURCES	11
GLOSSARY OF ACCEPTABLE TERMS	12
SELECTED TDD NUMBERS	14

PREFACE

The Seattle Women's Commission (SWC), in association with the Seattle Office for Women's Rights (OWR), has been actively addressing social justice and equity issues for women with disabilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed by Congress in July of 1990. The ADA requirements represent a positive step toward ensuring that persons with disabilities gain full and equal access in our society.

In response to the need for advocacy and education on this issue, we have reprinted the Disabilities Etiquette Handbook as one step toward this goal. It contains information that can help make Seattle a better place for all who visit, live, and work here.

The Disabilities Etiquette Handbook was reprinted with permission from the City of Chicago. Minor changes have been made to ensure effective use in Seattle.



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PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

People with disabilities prefer to be called people with disabilities.

People with disabilities are not conditions or diseases; they are individual human beings. (For example, an individual is not "an epileptic," but rather "a person with epilepsy.") First and foremost they are people; only secondarily do they have one or more disabling conditions. Hence, they prefer to be referred to, in print or in the broadcast media, as people with disabilities.

In any story, article, announcement, or advertisement, "people with disabilities" should be used either exclusively or, at a minimum, as the initial reference. Subsequent reference can use the terms "person with a disability" or "individuals with disabilities" for grammatical or narrative reasons. In conclusion, the appropriate and preferred initial reference is "people with disabilities."

Please refer to the Glossary of Acceptable terms contained within this handbook for a complete listing of acceptable terms and appropriate applications.

DISTINCTION BETWEEN DISABILITY/HANDICAP

A disability is a condition caused by accident, trauma, genetics, or disease which may limit a person's mobility, hearing, vision, speech, or mental function. Some people with disabilities have one or more disabilities.

A handicap is a physical or attitudinal constraint that is imposed upon a person, regardless of whether that person has a disability. Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary defines handicap as "to put to a disadvantage."

Example: Some people with disabilities use wheelchairs. Stairs, narrow doorways and curbs are handicaps imposed upon people with disabilities who use wheelchairs.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

Persons with disabilities are our nation's largest and fastest growing minority. According to the Congressional Research Service, there are 43 million persons with one or more disabilities in the United States. One out of every five Americans have some type of disabling condition. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that in 20 years that ratio will increase to one out of every two people in our country.

People with disabilities have all manner of disabling conditions: mobility impairments, speech and language impairments, and mental and learning disabilities.

The American with Disabilities Act was signed into law on July 26, 1990. The purpose of the Act is to:

- provide a clear and comprehensive national mandate to end discrimination against individuals with disabilities;
- provide enforceable standards addressing discrimination against individuals with disabilities; and,
- ensure that the federal government plays a central role in enforcing these standards on behalf of individuals with disabilities.

The term "disability" is defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of a person's major life activities, a record of such impairment, or being regarded as having such an impairment. This is the same definition used in sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Fair Housing Amendments Act.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) gives civil rights protection to individuals with disabilities that are like those provided to individuals on the basis of race, sex, national origin, and religion. It guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in employment, public accommodations, transportation, State and local government services, and telecommunications.

I. Employment

- Employers with 15 or more employees may not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities. For the first two years after July 26, 1992, the date when the employment provision of the ADA go into effect, only employers with 25 or more employees are covered.
- Employers must reasonably accommodate the disabilities of qualified applications or employees, unless an undue hardship would result.
- Employers may reject applications or fire employees who pose a direct threat to the health or safety of other individuals in the workplace.
- Applicants and employees are not protected from personnel actions based on their current illegal use of drugs. Drug testing is not affected.

- Employers may not discriminate against a qualified applicant or employee because of the known disability of an individual with whom the applicant or employee is known to have a relationship or association.

II. Public Accommodations

- Public accommodations such as restaurants, hotels, theaters, doctors' offices, pharmacies, retail stores, museums, libraries, parks, private schools, and child care centers may not discriminate on the basis of disability, effective January 26, 1992. Private clubs and religious organizations are exempt.
- Reasonable changes in policies, practices, and procedures must be made to avoid discrimination.
- Auxiliary aids and services must be provided to individuals with vision or hearing impairments or other individuals with disabilities so that they can have an equal opportunity to participate or benefit, unless an undue burden would result.
- Physical barriers in existing facilities must be removed if removal is readily achievable (i.e., easily accomplishable and able to be carried out without much difficulty or expense). If not, alternative methods of providing the services must be offered, if those methods are readily achievable.
- All new construction in public accommodations, as well as in "commercial facilities" such as office buildings, must be accessible. Elevators are generally not required in buildings under three stories or with fewer than 3,000 square feet per floor, unless the building is a shopping center, mall, or a professional office of a health care provider.
- Alteration must be accessible. When alterations to primary function areas are made, an accessible path of travel to the altered area (and the bathrooms, telephones, and drinking fountains serving that area) must be provided to the extent that the added accessibility costs are not disproportionate to the overall cost of the alterations. Elevators are required as described above.
- Entities such as hotels that also offer transportation generally must provide equivalent transportation service to individuals with disabilities. New fixed-route vehicles ordered on or after August 26, 1990, and capable of carrying more than 16 passengers must be accessible.
- Public accommodations may not discriminate against an individual or entity because of the known disability of an

individual with whom the individual or entity is known to have a relationship or association.

III. State and Local Government Operations

- State or local governments may not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities. All government facilities, services, and communications must be accessible consistent with the requirements of section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

IV. Telecommunications Relay Devices

- Companies offering telephone service to the general public must offer telephone relay services to individuals who use Telecommunications Devices for the Deaf (TDDs) or similar devices.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS IN THE WORK PLACE

Reasonable accommodations enhance the opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities who may not otherwise be considered for reasons unrelated to actual job requirements, to be/remain employed. The purpose of providing reasonable accommodations is to enable employers to hire or retain qualified job candidates, regardless of their disability by eliminating barriers in the work place.

According to the Department of Justice Government-Wide Regulations section 41.53 entitled Reasonable Accommodation, "A recipient shall make reasonable accommodation to the known physical or mental limitations of an otherwise qualified handicapped applicant or employee unless the recipient can demonstrate that the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the operation of its program."

Inquiries made of an individual about limitations in job performance must be directly related to the prospective or existing position. Accommodations are tailored for a certain job or situation that an individual is hired to perform. The law requires that each person with a disability must be consulted prior to the planning, and be involved in the implementation of an accommodation.

Types of accommodations include assistive devices, reassignment, modified work schedules, job modification, relocation, or a change in the physical plant. Examples of assistive devices often used in the work place include: Telecommunications Devices for the Deaf (TDD) or telephone amplifiers are often used by persons with

hearing impairments, wooden blocks to elevate desks and tables for wheelchair users, and large-type computer terminals and braille printers to assist persons with vision impairments.

Decisions to implement an accommodation should include making a choice that will best meet the needs of the individual by minimizing limitations and enhancing the individual's ability to perform job tasks, while serving the interests of your majority work force.

RECEPTION ETIQUETTE

Know where accessible rest rooms, drinking fountains, and telephones are located. If such facilities are not available, be ready to offer alternatives (e.g., the private/employee rest room, a glass of water, your desk phone).

1. Use a normal tone of voice when extending a verbal welcome. Do not raise your voice unless requested.
2. When introduced to a person with a disability, it is appropriate to offer to shake hands. People with limited hand use, or who wear an artificial limb can usually shake hands.
 - a. Shaking hands with the left hand is an acceptable greeting.
 - b. For those who cannot shake hands, touch the person on the shoulder or arm to welcome and acknowledge their presence.
3. Treat adults in a manner befitting adults:
 - a. Call a person by his or her first name only when extending that familiarity to all others present.
 - b. Never patronize people using wheelchairs by patting them on the head or shoulder.
4. When addressing a person who uses a wheelchair, never lean on the person's wheelchair. The chair is a part of the body space that belongs to the person who uses it.
5. When talking with a person who has a disability, look at and speak directly to that person, rather than through a companion who may be along.
6. If an interpreter is present, speak to the person who has scheduled the appointment, not to the interpreter. Always maintain eye contact with the applicant, not the interpreter.
7. Offer assistance in a dignified manner with sensitivity and respect. Be prepared to have the offer declined. Do not proceed to assist, if your offer to assist is declined. If the offer is accepted, listen to, or ask for, instructions.

- a. Allow a person with a visual impairment to take your arm (at or about the elbow). This will enable you to guide rather than propel or lead the person.
- b. Offer to hold or carry packages in a welcome manner. Example: "May I help you with your packages?"
- c. When offering to hang a coat or umbrella, do not offer to hang a cane or crutches, unless the individual requests otherwise.

CONVERSATION ETIQUETTE

1. When talking to a person with a disability, look at and speak directly to that person, rather than through a companion who may be along.
2. Relax. Don't be embarrassed if you happen to use accepted, common expressions, such as "See you later" or "Got to be running along," that seem to relate to the person's disability.
3. To get the attention of a person with a hearing impairment tap the person on the shoulder or wave your hand. Look directly at the person and speak clear, naturally and slowly to establish if the person can read your lips. Not all persons with hearing impairments can lip-read. Those who do will rely on facial expressions and other body language to help in understanding. Show consideration by placing yourself facing the light source and keeping your hands, cigarettes, and food away from your mouth when speaking. Keep moustaches well-trimmed. Shouting won't help. Written notes may.
4. When talking with a person in a wheelchair for more than a few minutes, utilize a chair, whenever possible, in order to place yourself at that person's eye level to facilitate conversation.
5. When greeting a person with a severe loss of vision, always identify yourself and others who may be with you. Say for example, "On my right is Penelope Potts." When conversing in a group, give a vocal cue by announcing the name of the person to whom you are speaking. Speak in a normal tone of voice, indicate in advance when you will be moving from one place to another, and let it be known when the conversation is at an end.
6. Listen attentively when you are talking to a person who has a speech impairment. Keep your manner encouraging rather than correcting. exercise patience rather than attempting to speak for a person with speech difficulty. When necessary, ask short questions that require short answers or a nod of shake of the head. Never pretend to understand if you are having

difficulty doing so. Repeat what you understand, or incorporate interviewee's statements into each of the following questions. The person's reactions will clue you in and guide you to understanding.

- 6a. If you have difficulty communicating, be willing to repeat or rephrase a question. Open ended questions are more appropriate than closed ended questions.

Example:

Closed ended question: You were a tax accountant at XYZ Company, in the corporate planning department, for seven years. What did you do there?

Open ended question: Tell me about your recent position as a tax accountant.

7. Do not shout at a hearing impaired person. Shouting distorts sounds accepted through hearing aids and inhibits lip reading. Do not shout at a person who is blind or visually impaired--he can hear you!
8. In order to facilitate conversation, be prepared to offer a visual cue to a hearing impaired person or an audible cue to a vision impaired person, especially when more than one person is speaking.

INTERVIEWING SCHEDULING ETIQUETTE

Some interviewees with visual or mobility impairments will phone in, prior to the appointment date, specifically for travel information. The scheduler should walk the travel path in order to provide interviewees with detailed directions.

1. Make sure the place where you plan to conduct the interview is accessible by checking the following:
- a) Are there handicap parking spaces available and nearby?
 - b) Is there a ramp or a step-free entrance?
 - c) Are there accessible restrooms?
 - d) If the interview is not on the first floor, does the building have an elevator?
 - e) Are there any water fountains and telephones at the proper height for a person in a wheelchair to use?
 - f) If an interview site is inaccessible (e.g., steps without a ramp, or a building without an elevator), inform the person about the barrier, prior to the interview, and offer to make arrangements for an alternative interview site.

2. When scheduling interview for persons with disabilities consider their needs ahead of time.
 - a) When giving directions to a person in a wheelchair, consider distance, weather conditions, and physical obstacles such as stairs, curbs, and steep hills.
 - b) Use specifics such as "left a hundred feet" or "right two yards" when directing a person with a visual impairment.
 - c) Be considerate of the additional travel time that may be required by a person with a disability.
3. Familiarize the interviewee in advance with the names of all persons she/he will be meeting during their visit. This courtesy allows persons with disabilities to be aware of the names/faces she/he will be meeting.
4. People with disabilities utilize a variety of transportation services when traveling to and from work. When scheduling an interview be aware that the person may be required to make a reservation 24 hours in advance, plus travel time. Provide the interviewee with an estimated time to schedule their return trip when arranging the interview appointment.

Expect the same measure of punctuality and performance from people with disabilities, that is required by every potential or actual employee.

People with disabilities expect equal treatment, not special treatment!

INTERVIEWING TECHNIQUE ETIQUETTE

1. Conduct interviews in a manner that emphasizes abilities, achievements, and individual qualities.
2. Conduct your interview as you would with anyone. Be considerate without being patronizing.
3. When interviewing a person with a speech impediment, stifle any urge to complete a sentence for the interviewee.
4. If it appears that a person's ability inhibits performance of a job ask: How would you perform this job?

Examples:

Inappropriate: I notice that you are in a wheelchair, and I wonder how you get around. Tell me about your disability.

Appropriate: This position requires digging and using a wheelbarrow, as you can see from the job description. Do you foresee any difficulty in performing the required tasks? If

so, do you have any suggestions as to how these tasks can be performed?

INTERVIEWING COURTESIES FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Interviewer(s) need to know whether or not the job site is accessible and should be prepared to answer accessibility-related questions.

Interviewing Persons Using Mobility Aids:

1. Enable people who use crutches, cane(s), or wheelchairs to keep them within reach.
2. Be aware that some wheelchair users may choose to transfer themselves out of their wheelchairs, into an office chair, for the duration of the interview.
3. Here again, when speaking to a person in a wheelchair or on crutches for more than a few minutes, sit in a chair. Place yourself at that person's eye level to facilitate conversation.

Interviewing Persons with Vision Impairments:

1. When greeting a person with a vision impairment, always identify yourself and introduce anyone else who might be present.
2. If the person does not extend their hand (to shake hands), verbally extend a welcome.

Example: Welcome to the City of Seattle, Personnel Department.

3. When offering seating, place the person's hand on the back or arm of the seat. A verbal cue is helpful as well.
4. Let the person know if you move or need to end the conversation.
5. Allow people who use crutches, canes, or wheelchairs to keep them within reach.

Interviewing Persons with Speech Impairments:

1. Give your whole attention with interest when talking to a person who has a speech impairment.
2. Ask short questions that require short answers or a nod of the head.

3. Do not pretend to understand if you do not. Try rephrasing what you wish to communicate, or ask the person to repeat what you do not understand.
4. Do not raise your voice. Most speech impaired persons can hear and understand.

Interviewing Persons who are Deaf or Hearing Impaired:

1. If you need to attract the attention of a person who is deaf or hearing impaired, touch them lightly on the shoulder.
2. If the interviewee lip-reads, look directly at them. Speak clearly at a normal pace. Do not exaggerate your lip movements or shout. Speak expressively because the person will rely on your facial expressions, gestures, and body movements to understand you. Maintain eye contact. NOTE: It is estimated that only 4 out of 10 spoken words are visible on the lips.
3. Place yourself facing the light source and keep your hands, cigarettes, and food away from your mouth when speaking.
4. Shouting does not help and can be detrimental. Only raise your voice when requested. Brief concise written notes may be helpful.
5. In the United States, most deaf people use American Sign Language (ASL). ASL is not a universal language. ASL is a language with its own syntax, and grammatical structure. When scheduling an interpreter for a non-English speaking person, be certain to retain an interpreter that speaks and interprets in the language of that person.
6. If an interpreter is present, it is commonplace for the interpreter to be seated beside the interviewer, across from the interviewee.
7. Interpreters facilitate communication. They should not be consulted or regarded as a reference for the interviewee.

DISABILITY RESOURCES

Abused Deaf Women's Advocacy Services (TDD only)	
Crisis	236-3134
Office	726-0093
Community Service Center for the	
Deaf and Hard of Hearing V/TDD	322-4996
Disabilities Law Project	800/833-9656
Disabilities Research and Information Coalition	548-0215
Hearing, Speech and Deafness Center, V/TDD	323-5770
Interpreter Referral Service	322-5551
Seattle Disabled Business Women's Network	625-1034
TDD	361-0572
Washington Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities	461-4550
Washington Library for the Blind and	
Physically Handicapped	464-6930
Women's Braille Press, Minneapolis,	612/872-4352

GLOSSARY OF ACCEPTABLE TERMS	
ACCEPTABLE TERMS	UNACCEPTABLE TERMS
Person, person with a disability.	Cripple, crippled--the image conveyed is of a twisted, deformed, useless body.
Disability, a general term used for functional limitation that interferes with a person's ability, for example, to hear, walk, learn, or lift. It may refer to a physical, mental, or sensory condition.	Handicap, handicapped person, or handicapped.
People with cerebral palsy, people with spinal cord injuries.	Cerebral palsied, spinal cord injured, etc. Never identify people solely by their disability.
Person who has had a spinal cord injury, polio, a stroke, etc., or a person who has multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, arthritis, etc.	Victim; people with disabilities do not like to be perceived as victims for the rest of their lives, long after any victimization has occurred.
Has a disability, has a condition of (spina bifida, etc.), or born without legs, etc.	Defective, defect, deformed, gimp, vegetable--These words are offensive, dehumanizing, degrading, and stigmatizing.
Deafness/hearing impairment. "Deafness" refers to a person who has a total loss of hearing. "Hearing impairment" refers to a person who has a partial loss of hearing within a range from slight to severe. "Hard of hearing" describes a hearing-impaired person who communicates through speaking and speechreading, and who usually has listening and speaking abilities adequate for ordinary telephone communication. Many hard-of-hearing individuals use a hearing aid.	Deaf and dumb--is as bad as it sounds. Inability to hear or speak does not indicate less intelligence.

GLOSSARY OF ACCEPTABLE TERMS

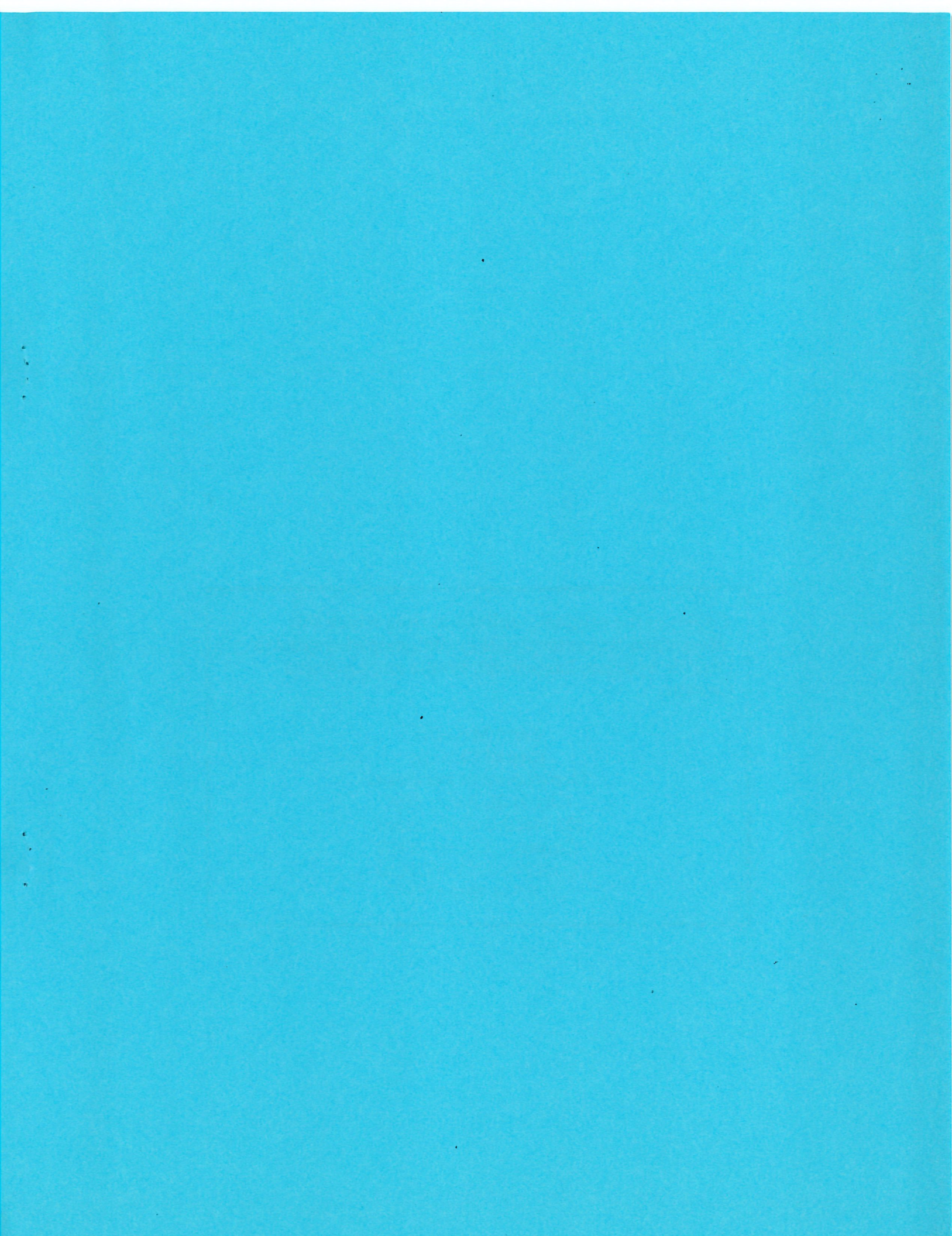
ACCEPTABLE TERMS	UNACCEPTABLE TERMS
<p>Person who has a mental or developmental disability.</p>	<p>Retarded, moron, imbecile, idiot--These are offensive to people who bear the label.</p>
<p>Uses a wheelchair or crutches; a wheelchair user; walks with crutches.</p>	<p>Confined/Restricted to a wheelchair, wheelchair bound. Most people who use a wheelchair or mobility devices do not regard them as confining. They are viewed as liberating, a means of getting around.</p>
<p>Able-bodied, able to walk, see, hear, etc.; people who are not disabled.</p>	<p>Healthy--when used to contrast with 'disabled,' 'healthy' implies the person with a disability is unhealthy. Many people with disabilities have excellent health.</p>
<p>People who do not have a disability.</p>	<p>Normal--when used as the opposite of 'disabled,' implies the person is abnormal. No one wants to be labeled as abnormal.</p>
<p>A person who has (name the disability).</p> <p>Example: a person who has multiple sclerosis.</p>	<p>Afflicted with/suffers from--most people with disabilities don't regard themselves as afflicted or suffering continually.</p> <p>Afflicted: a disability is not an affliction; an affliction may have caused a disability.</p>

SELECTED TDD NUMBERS

King County Information	296-0100
Metro Information	684-2029
Office for Women's Rights	684-0390
Parks Department	684-4950
Police and Fire	447-3323
Seattle City Light	684-3225
Seattle Poison Center	526-2121
Seattle Public Library	386-4697
Seattle Rape Relief	325-5531
Seattle/King County Health Services	587-4600

Portions of this handbook were excerpted, with permission, from the Disability Etiquette Handbook, City of Chicago, Department of Personnel.

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Copies of the original publication from which this information was excerpted is available upon request in English, Spanish, Large Print, Braille and on Audio Cassette.

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