Workplace Accommodation Request Letter

A template for chemical and fragrance sensitivity under the ADA

Not legal advice. This template is general information, not legal advice, and it doesn't guarantee any outcome. Laws and workplace policies vary. For advice about your situation, talk with an employment attorney, or contact JAN or the EEOC. For medical questions, talk with a licensed clinician.

Before you write

- The ADA's employment rules apply to employers with 15 or more employees, including state and local governments [3].
- The ADA has no list of qualifying conditions. It covers an impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a record of one, or being regarded as having one [1].
- Requests don't have to be in writing. You can use plain English, and you don't need to mention the ADA or say "reasonable accommodation" [2]. A letter can still help you keep a clear record.
- A request is the first step in an informal, interactive process with your employer [2].
- You don't have to name the exact accommodation, but you do need to describe the problems the workplace causes [2].
- If your need isn't obvious, your employer may ask for reasonable documentation of your condition and limitations [2]. Your clinician can help with this.

Letter template

Replace the [bracketed] parts. Share only the medical details you're comfortable sharing.

[Date]

To: [Supervisor's name and/or Human Resources contact]
From: [Your name, job title, department]

Re: Request for reasonable accommodation

Dear [Name],

I am writing to request a reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act. I have a medical condition [name it here only if you choose to] that causes [symptoms, for example headaches, breathing problems or trouble concentrating] when I'm exposed to [fragrances, cleaning products, pesticides, fresh paint or other triggers] at work.

These exposures make it hard for me to [job tasks affected, for example work at my desk for a full day, attend meetings in the conference room, or concentrate on detailed work].

I'd like to discuss accommodations that could help, such as:

- [Accommodation 1, for example a fragrance-free work area]
- [Accommodation 2, for example advance notice of painting, pest treatments or floor waxing]
- [Accommodation 3, for example working from home on days when strong products are used]

I'm open to other options that would work for both of us. If you need information from my healthcare provider, please let me know what you need and I will work on getting it.

I'd appreciate the chance to meet and talk about this. Please let me know a time that works, and please keep this request confidential.

Thank you,
[Your name]
[Phone or email]

Accommodation ideas JAN lists for chemical sensitivity

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) lists these among possible accommodations [1]. Not everyone needs them, and many people need only a few.

- A workspace with working windows
- Making sure the ventilation system isn't spreading pollutants, with HEPA filters in the ventilation system if possible
- Air purification in the building or at your workstation
- A work environment free of pollutants such as fragrances, toxic cleaning agents, pesticides, exhaust fumes and tobacco smoke
- Exhaust systems to remove fumes from copiers and similar machines
- Advance notice of remodeling, painting, pesticide applications, floor waxing and carpet shampooing
- Alternative work arrangements, such as another office or floor, working outside, or working from home
- Cleaning, maintenance and remodeling done when the building isn't occupied

This template covers employment. Housing requests follow different rules, so it isn't included here.

Keep a record

Date of request: _____

Sent to: _____

Response and next steps:

Sources

1. Job Accommodation Network (JAN). Multiple Chemical Sensitivity. Accessed October 31, 2026. https://askjan.org/disabilities/Multiple-Chemical-Sensitivity.cfm
2. U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Enforcement Guidance on Reasonable Accommodation and Undue Hardship under the ADA. October 17, 2002. Accessed October 31, 2026. https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/enforcement-guidance-reasonable-accommodation-and-undue-hardship-under-ada
3. U.S. Department of Justice, ADA.gov. Introduction to the Americans with Disabilities Act. Accessed October 31, 2026. https://www.ada.gov/topics/intro-to-ada/

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