

**TITLE 42 - THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELFARE**  
**CHAPTER 126 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES**  
**SUBCHAPTER I - EMPLOYMENT**

**§ 12111. Definitions**

As used in this subchapter:

**(1) Commission**

The term “Commission” means the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission established by section 2000e-4 of this title.

**(2) Covered entity**

The term “covered entity” means an employer, employment agency, labor organization, or joint labor-management committee.

**(3) Direct threat**

The term “direct threat” means a significant risk to the health or safety of others that cannot be eliminated by reasonable accommodation.

**(4) Employee**

The term “employee” means an individual employed by an employer. With respect to employment in a foreign country, such term includes an individual who is a citizen of the United States.

**(5) Employer**

**(A) In general**

The term “employer” means a person engaged in an industry affecting commerce who has 15 or more employees for each working day in each of 20 or more calendar weeks in the current or preceding calendar year, and any agent of such person, except that, for two years following the effective date of this subchapter, an employer means a person engaged in an industry affecting commerce who has 25 or more employees for each working day in each of 20 or more calendar weeks in the current or preceding year, and any agent of such person.

**(B) Exceptions**

The term “employer” does not include—

- (i) the United States, a corporation wholly owned by the government of the United States, or an Indian tribe; or
- (ii) a bona fide private membership club (other than a labor organization) that is exempt from taxation under section 501 (c) of title 26.

**(6) Illegal use of drugs**

**(A) In general**

The term “illegal use of drugs” means the use of drugs, the possession or distribution of which is unlawful under the Controlled Substances Act [21 U.S.C. 801 et seq.]. Such term does not include the use of a drug taken under supervision by a licensed health care professional, or other uses authorized by the Controlled Substances Act or other provisions of Federal law.

**(B) Drugs**

The term “drug” means a controlled substance, as defined in schedules I through V of section 202 of the Controlled Substances Act [21 U.S.C. 812].

**(7) Person, etc.**

The terms “person”, “labor organization”, “employment agency”, “commerce”, and “industry affecting commerce”, shall have the same meaning given such terms in section 2000e of this title.

**(8) Qualified individual**

*NB: This unofficial compilation of the U.S. Code is current as of Jan. 4, 2012 (see <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/uscprint.html>).*

The term “qualified individual” means an individual who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of the employment position that such individual holds or desires. For the purposes of this subchapter, consideration shall be given to the employer’s judgment as to what functions of a job are essential, and if an employer has prepared a written description before advertising or interviewing applicants for the job, this description shall be considered evidence of the essential functions of the job.

**(9) Reasonable accommodation**

The term “reasonable accommodation” may include—

- (A) making existing facilities used by employees readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities; and
- (B) job restructuring, part-time or modified work schedules, reassignment to a vacant position, acquisition or modification of equipment or devices, appropriate adjustment or modifications of examinations, training materials or policies, the provision of qualified readers or interpreters, and other similar accommodations for individuals with disabilities.

**(10) Undue hardship**

**(A) In general**

The term “undue hardship” means an action requiring significant difficulty or expense, when considered in light of the factors set forth in subparagraph (B).

**(B) Factors to be considered**

In determining whether an accommodation would impose an undue hardship on a covered entity, factors to be considered include—

- (i) the nature and cost of the accommodation needed under this chapter;
- (ii) the overall financial resources of the facility or facilities involved in the provision of the reasonable accommodation; the number of persons employed at such facility; the effect on expenses and resources, or the impact otherwise of such accommodation upon the operation of the facility;
- (iii) the overall financial resources of the covered entity; the overall size of the business of a covered entity with respect to the number of its employees; the number, type, and location of its facilities; and
- (iv) the type of operation or operations of the covered entity, including the composition, structure, and functions of the workforce of such entity; the geographic separateness, administrative, or fiscal relationship of the facility or facilities in question to the covered entity.

(Pub. L. 101–336, title I, § 101, July 26, 1990, 104 Stat. 330; Pub. L. 102–166, title I, § 109(a), Nov. 21, 1991, 105 Stat. 1077; Pub. L. 110–325, § 5(c)(1), Sept. 25, 2008, 122 Stat. 3557.)

## References in Text

The effective date of this subchapter, referred to in par. (5)(A), is 24 months after July 26, 1990, see section 108 of Pub. L. 101–336, set out as an Effective Date note below.

The Controlled Substances Act, referred to in par. (6)(A), is title II of Pub. L. 91–513, Oct. 27, 1970, 84 Stat. 1242, as amended, which is classified principally to subchapter I (§ 801 et seq.) of chapter 13 of Title 21, Food and Drugs. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 801 of Title 21 and Tables.

This chapter, referred to in par. (10)(B)(i), was in the original “this Act”, meaning Pub. L. 101–336, July 26, 1990, 104 Stat. 327, which is classified principally to this chapter. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 12101 of this title and Tables.

## Amendments

2008—Par. (8). Pub. L. 110–325 struck out “with a disability” after “individual” in heading and the first two places appearing in text.

*NB: This unofficial compilation of the U.S. Code is current as of Jan. 4, 2012 (see <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/uscpri.html>).*

1991—Par. (4). Pub. L. 102–166 inserted at end “With respect to employment in a foreign country, such term includes an individual who is a citizen of the United States.”

**Effective Date of 2008 Amendment**

Amendment by Pub. L. 110–325 effective Jan. 1, 2009, see section 8 of Pub. L. 110–325, set out as a note under section 705 of Title 29, Labor.

**Effective Date of 1991 Amendment**

Amendment by Pub. L. 102–166 inapplicable to conduct occurring before Nov. 21, 1991, see section 109(c) of Pub. L. 102–166, set out as a note under section 2000e of this title.

**Effective Date**

Section 108 of title I of Pub. L. 101–336 provided that: “This title [enacting this subchapter] shall become effective 24 months after the date of enactment [July 26, 1990].”