



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Department on Disability Services



Adaptive Equipment



Employee Orientation Phase 1

10/2012

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What is Adaptive Equipment?

Devices that help people do simple, everyday tasks more independently.

There are two broad types of adaptive equipment:

Assistive Technology

Durable Medical Equipment (DME)

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Increasing a person's independence means they will be able to perform some tasks with less support from the staff.

Assistive technology is not defined by what it is, but how it functions for the person. It is anything that assists a person in carrying out an activity that they wouldn't be able to perform, or perform as well or as long, without the device.

Durable Medical Equipment (DME) is a term used primarily by insurance companies to describe any medical equipment used in the home to aid in a better quality of living.

What is the purpose of Adaptive Equipment?

To assist people with activities of daily living (ADLs).

■ ADLs include:

- Bathing
- Dining
- Dressing
- Grooming, and
- Toileting



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Many people take for granted the ability to complete simple tasks such as taking a walk, using the computer, or reading the newspaper. When these everyday tasks are limited due to illness, age, or disability, using the appropriate adaptive equipment can help.

Examples of DME (Durable Medical Equipment)

- **Bath Safety:** Bath rails; Commodes with raised toilet seats and safety rails
- **Diabetic Supplies:** Testing supplies
- **Homecare Beds:** Adjustable and/or with safety rails
- **Power Chairs**
- **Pressure/Ulcer Prevention:** Mattresses
- **Respiratory:** Nebulizers
- **Scooters /Walking Aids:** Walkers/Canes
- **Wheelchairs**

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Examples of Assistive Technology - Vision

- Eyeglasses/Magnifying glass
- Large-print books/Books on tape
- Adapted paper (e.g., raised surfaces, highlighted lines, various colors, sizes)
- Calculator with large keys or large display/Talking calculators
- Braille translation software (translates text that can be Brailled)/Braille printer
- Computer with speech output or feedback
- Operating system special-accessibility options (screen enlargement, adjustment of keyboard, sound, display, mouse)
- Computer-screen magnifiers/Glare-reduction screens
- Talking electronic dictionary, thesaurus, spell checker
- Screen readers

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Examples of Assistive Technology - Communication

- Roller-ball pointing device with a separate button for clicking
- Adapted handles (e.g., pencil grips)
- Scotch tape to hold paper in place, Velcro
- Adapted book-page turners
- Switches/Head pointers or mouth stick to press keys on the keyboard
- Joysticks/Adapted mouse
- Foot pedals or hardware switches Instead of a mouse
- Slant board/Tilt board/Book holders
- Voice input or output devices/Voice-recognition software (turns the spoken word into the typed word)
- Eye-controlled computer-input devices
- Touch window/screen/Alternative keyboards

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Examples of Assistive Technology - Hearing

- Hearing aids
- Signaling devices
- Pictures, photographs, objects
- Communication boards
- Assistive listening devices (e.g., amplified phone system)
- Headphones (to keep the listener focused, adjust sound, etc.)
- FM amplification systems (e.g., auditory trainer)
- TDD/TTY for phone service
- Closed-captioning television
- Real-time captioning
- CD-based (text)books, electronic books
- Audio-voice amplification device

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Identifying the Need for Adaptive Equipment

- Sometimes, consistent staff members may help identify the need for adaptive equipment
- Or, someone who works closely with the individual, or a family member, or even the individual may identify the need.
- What do you do then?

Tell the nurse or your supervisor

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Speech Language Pathologists can evaluate for communication plans or devices that can assist person in expressing

Physical Therapists and Occupational Therapists can evaluate the need for adaptive equipment, assistive devices, transfer techniques and positioning needs. The entire Interdisciplinary team should be involved in developing a Health Care Plan for which should include adaptive equipment needs.

The DSP takes responsibility for noticing/reporting a need for adaptive equipment when an individual appears to have problems performing ADLs.

Obtaining Equipment and Using It

- The ISP team should be involved in a decision to obtain an assessment.
- A specialized assessment should be done (e.g. by a physical therapist) to truly determine the need for the equipment and to obtain it.
- DSPs should be trained in its use and care.

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Role of the Direct Support Professional

- Be observant!!!! Your information is very valuable to the person and the team.
- Receive training on proper use
 - Covered in Specialized/ Individualized Training: Phase 2
- Encourage proper use by the individual and by others
- Don't use damaged equipment!
- Continually report damage of adaptive equipment until it is fixed

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Reporting damage to adaptive equipment is every ones responsibility. Reporting should take place immediately to ensure prompt attention to the needs of the individual. The staff as well as the individual should be trained in the proper use and care of adaptive equipment.

Give examples of “damaged” equipment

Ensure participants know the process of reporting damaged equipment. Who do you report that information to?

Questions?



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