

are part of a covered entity's health plan.

[56 FR 35734, July 26, 1991, as amended at 81 FR 31139, May 17, 2016; 83 FR 65296, Dec. 20, 2018]

§ 1630.15 Defenses.

Defenses to an allegation of discrimination under this part may include, but are not limited to, the following:

(a) *Disparate treatment charges.* It may be a defense to a charge of disparate treatment brought under §§1630.4 through 1630.8 and 1630.11 through 1630.12 that the challenged action is justified by a legitimate, nondiscriminatory reason.

(b) *Charges of discriminatory application of selection criteria—(1) In general.* It may be a defense to a charge of discrimination, as described in §1630.10, that an alleged application of qualification standards, tests, or selection criteria that screens out or tends to screen out or otherwise denies a job or benefit to an individual with a disability has been shown to be job-related and consistent with business necessity, and such performance cannot be accomplished with reasonable accommodation, as required in this part.

(2) *Direct threat as a qualification standard.* The term “qualification standard” may include a requirement that an individual shall not pose a direct threat to the health or safety of the individual or others in the workplace. (See §1630.2(r) defining direct threat.)

(c) *Other disparate impact charges.* It may be a defense to a charge of discrimination brought under this part that a uniformly applied standard, criterion, or policy has a disparate impact on an individual with a disability or a class of individuals with disabilities that the challenged standard, criterion or policy has been shown to be job-related and consistent with business necessity, and such performance cannot be accomplished with reasonable accommodation, as required in this part.

(d) *Charges of not making reasonable accommodation.* It may be a defense to a charge of discrimination, as described in §1630.9, that a requested or necessary accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the operation of the covered entity's business.

(e) *Conflict with other Federal laws.* It may be a defense to a charge of discrimination under this part that a challenged action is required or necessitated by another Federal law or regulation, or that another Federal law or regulation prohibits an action (including the provision of a particular reasonable accommodation) that would otherwise be required by this part.

(f) *Claims based on transitory and minor impairments under the “regarded as” prong.* It may be a defense to a charge of discrimination by an individual claiming coverage under the “regarded as” prong of the definition of disability that the impairment is (in the case of an actual impairment) or would be (in the case of a perceived impairment) “transitory and minor.” To establish this defense, a covered entity must demonstrate that the impairment is both “transitory” and “minor.” Whether the impairment at issue is or would be “transitory and minor” is to be determined objectively. A covered entity may not defeat “regarded as” coverage of an individual simply by demonstrating that it subjectively believed the impairment was transitory and minor; rather, the covered entity must demonstrate that the impairment is (in the case of an actual impairment) or would be (in the case of a perceived impairment) both transitory and minor. For purposes of this section, “transitory” is defined as lasting or expected to last six months or less.

(g) *Additional defenses.* It may be a defense to a charge of discrimination under this part that the alleged discriminatory action is specifically permitted by §1630.14 or §1630.16.

[56 FR 35734, July 26, 1991, as amended at 76 FR 17003, Mar. 25, 2011]

§ 1630.16 Specific activities permitted.

(a) *Religious entities.* A religious corporation, association, educational institution, or society is permitted to give preference in employment to individuals of a particular religion to perform work connected with the carrying on by that corporation, association, educational institution, or society of its activities. A religious entity may require that all applicants and employees conform to the religious tenets of such organization. However, a religious

entity may not discriminate against a qualified individual, who satisfies the permitted religious criteria, on the basis of his or her disability.

(b) *Regulation of alcohol and drugs.* A covered entity:

(1) May prohibit the illegal use of drugs and the use of alcohol at the workplace by all employees;

(2) May require that employees not be under the influence of alcohol or be engaging in the illegal use of drugs at the workplace;

(3) May require that all employees behave in conformance with the requirements established under the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 (41 U.S.C. 701 *et seq.*);

(4) May hold an employee who engages in the illegal use of drugs or who is an alcoholic to the same qualification standards for employment or job performance and behavior to which the entity holds its other employees, even if any unsatisfactory performance or behavior is related to the employee's drug use or alcoholism;

(5) May require that its employees employed in an industry subject to such regulations comply with the standards established in the regulations (if any) of the Departments of Defense and Transportation, and of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, regarding alcohol and the illegal use of drugs; and

(6) May require that employees employed in sensitive positions comply with the regulations (if any) of the Departments of Defense and Transportation and of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission that apply to employment in sensitive positions subject to such regulations.

(c) *Drug testing*—(1) *General policy.* For purposes of this part, a test to determine the illegal use of drugs is not considered a medical examination. Thus, the administration of such drug tests by a covered entity to its job applicants or employees is not a violation of § 1630.13 of this part. However, this part does not encourage, prohibit, or authorize a covered entity to conduct drug tests of job applicants or employees to determine the illegal use of drugs or to make employment decisions based on such test results.

(2) *Transportation employees.* This part does not encourage, prohibit, or authorize the otherwise lawful exercise by entities subject to the jurisdiction of the Department of Transportation of authority to:

(i) Test employees of entities in, and applicants for, positions involving safety sensitive duties for the illegal use of drugs or for on-duty impairment by alcohol; and

(ii) Remove from safety-sensitive positions persons who test positive for illegal use of drugs or on-duty impairment by alcohol pursuant to paragraph (c)(2)(i) of this section.

(3) *Confidentiality.* Any information regarding the medical condition or history of any employee or applicant obtained from a test to determine the illegal use of drugs, except information regarding the illegal use of drugs, is subject to the requirements of § 1630.14(b) (2) and (3) of this part.

(d) *Regulation of smoking.* A covered entity may prohibit or impose restrictions on smoking in places of employment. Such restrictions do not violate any provision of this part.

(e) *Infectious and communicable diseases; food handling jobs*—(1) *In general.* Under title I of the ADA, section 103(d)(1), the Secretary of Health and Human Services is to prepare a list, to be updated annually, of infectious and communicable diseases which are transmitted through the handling of food. (Copies may be obtained from Center for Infectious Diseases, Centers for Disease Control, 1600 Clifton Road, NE., Mailstop C09, Atlanta, GA 30333.) If an individual with a disability is disabled by one of the infectious or communicable diseases included on this list, and if the risk of transmitting the disease associated with the handling of food cannot be eliminated by reasonable accommodation, a covered entity may refuse to assign or continue to assign such individual to a job involving food handling. However, if the individual with a disability is a current employee, the employer must consider whether he or she can be accommodated by reassignment to a vacant position not involving food handling.

(2) *Effect on State or other laws.* This part does not preempt, modify, or amend any State, county, or local law,

ordinance or regulation applicable to food handling which:

(i) Is in accordance with the list, referred to in paragraph (e)(1) of this section, of infectious or communicable diseases and the modes of transmissibility published by the Secretary of Health and Human Services; and

(ii) Is designed to protect the public health from individuals who pose a significant risk to the health or safety of others, where that risk cannot be eliminated by reasonable accommodation.

(f) *Health insurance, life insurance, and other benefit plans*—(1) An insurer, hospital, or medical service company, health maintenance organization, or any agent or entity that administers benefit plans, or similar organizations may underwrite risks, classify risks, or administer such risks that are based on or not inconsistent with State law.

(2) A covered entity may establish, sponsor, observe or administer the terms of a bona fide benefit plan that are based on underwriting risks, classifying risks, or administering such risks that are based on or not inconsistent with State law.

(3) A covered entity may establish, sponsor, observe, or administer the terms of a bona fide benefit plan that is not subject to State laws that regulate insurance.

(4) The activities described in paragraphs (f) (1), (2), and (3) of this section are permitted unless these activities are being used as a subterfuge to evade the purposes of this part.

[56 FR 35734, July 26, 1991, 76 FR 17003, Mar. 25, 2011]

APPENDIX TO PART 1630—INTERPRETIVE GUIDANCE ON TITLE I OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

INTRODUCTION

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a landmark piece of civil rights legislation signed into law on July 26, 1990, and amended effective January 1, 2009. See 42 U.S.C. 12101 *et seq.*, as amended. In passing the ADA, Congress recognized that “discrimination against individuals with disabilities continues to be a serious and pervasive social problem” and that the “continuing existence of unfair and unnecessary discrimination and prejudice denies people with disabilities the opportunity to compete on an equal basis and to pursue those opportunities for which

our free society is justifiably famous, and costs the United States billions of dollars in unnecessary expenses resulting from dependency and nonproductivity.” 42 U.S.C. 12101(a)(2), (8). Discrimination on the basis of disability persists in critical areas such as housing, public accommodations, education, transportation, communication, recreation, institutionalization, health services, voting, access to public services, and employment. 42 U.S.C. 12101(a)(3). Accordingly, the ADA prohibits discrimination in a wide range of areas, including employment, public services, and public accommodations.

Title I of the ADA prohibits disability-based discrimination in employment. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (the Commission or the EEOC) is responsible for enforcement of title I (and parts of title V) of the ADA. Pursuant to the ADA as amended, the EEOC is expressly granted the authority and is expected to amend these regulations. 42 U.S.C. 12205a. Under title I of the ADA, covered entities may not discriminate against qualified individuals on the basis of disability in regard to job application procedures, the hiring, advancement or discharge of employees, employee compensation, job training, or other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment. 42 U.S.C. 12112(a). For these purposes, “discriminate” includes (1) limiting, segregating, or classifying a job applicant or employee in a way that adversely affects the opportunities or status of the applicant or employee; (2) participating in a contractual or other arrangement or relationship that has the effect of subjecting a covered entity’s qualified applicants or employees to discrimination; (3) utilizing standards, criteria, or other methods of administration that have the effect of discrimination on the basis of disability; (4) not making reasonable accommodation to the known physical or mental limitations of an otherwise qualified individual with a disability, unless the covered entity can demonstrate that the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the operation of the business of the covered entity; (5) denying employment opportunities to a job applicant or employee who is otherwise qualified, if such denial is based on the need to make reasonable accommodation; (6) using qualification standards, employment tests or other selection criteria that screen out or tend to screen out an individual with a disability or a class of individuals with disabilities unless the standard, test or other selection criterion is shown to be job related for the position in question and is consistent with business necessity; and (7) subjecting applicants or employees to prohibited medical inquiries or examinations. See 42 U.S.C. 12112(b), (d).

As with other civil rights laws, individuals seeking protection under these anti-discrimination provisions of the ADA generally