

EEO TRUST

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES TRUST
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Disability



- According to Census data one in five New Zealanders has an impairment.
- 15% of the **working population** has some form of disability. Accident or injury is the most common cause of disability for the working population.
- Only 10% of **unemployed** disabled people need modified work areas or equipment. 60% have no special requirements.
- Only 9% of **employed** disabled people need modified work duties or hours.
- Of the disabled community, those aged between 25 and 44 have the highest unemployment rate (64%).¹
- 43.6% of disabled people participate in the workforce, in contrast to 69.8% of the population who do not have a disability.²
- There is a perception/stereotype that disabled employees are more likely to cause an accident or be less productive. Research indicates that this is not the case; with workplace safety rates for disabled people at 99.78%.³

Best practice

Weldwell New Zealand

Napier electrode factory, Weldwell New Zealand, has two deaf staff whose main means of communication is sign language. They work on the production line and manager Bill Symons says their presence creates a good atmosphere. "Our deaf staff bring out the best in people and they're fun to have around. They're also really tenacious. They give 110%."

¹ For points 1-5 refer to *Living with a Disability in New Zealand* (2004) and *Disability Counts* (2001) for further information.

² Refer to Framework for the future: Equal Employment Opportunities in New Zealand. (2004)
<http://www.hrc.co.nz/hrc/worddocs/Framework%20for%20the%20Future-full%20report%2010June04.pdf>

³ Refer to Perry, D. *Moving Forward: Toward Decent Work for People with Disabilities*. (2003)

Progressive Enterprises

A database expert working for Progressive Enterprises is valued for his work. He is also visually impaired. David Kerslake has worked in IT for more than 20 years and is an expert in data administration. He uses magnification software and speech software on his workstation and says that the modern accessibility programs enable him to access both text and Windows-based applications. Graphic data can be magnified easily, but there are limitations with speech. As his manager, Alan Janman, says, "David is an expert in our core systems and absolutely key to our ability to maintain the systems. He's our principal centre of expertise."

Employing Disabled People

This EEO Trust publication explores why and how to employ disabled people. It includes case studies, practical suggestions and a list of agencies and resources for further advice and assistance. Download at www.eeotrust.org.nz/toolkits/disability.cfm

People Power: Successful Diversity at Work

More than 60 case studies on the EEO Trust website profile employers who are using best practice to employ a diverse range of staff, including disabled people. These case studies have been developed by the EEO Trust and the Department of Labour, and can be searched according to 1 of 8 diversity issues. www.eeotrust.org.nz/peoplepower/index.cfm

What do you know about disability in your workforce?

Eg:

- percentage of employees with a disability
- recruitment strategies regarding candidates with a disability
- Disability network links – Mainstream programme, Workbridge, Accomplish, ACC, WINZ etc. These can include funding and support.
- Accessibility of workplace
- Social inclusion audit
- Training and development