

*The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission*

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EEOC Contacts: Jean P. Kamp  
Regional Attorney  
Milwaukee District Office  
(414) 297-1860  
TTY: (414) 297-1115

Laurie Vasichek  
Senior Trial Attorney  
Minneapolis Area Office  
(612) 335-4061  
(612) 335-4045

NWA Contacts: Northwest Media Relations  
(612) 726-2331

## EEOC AND NORTHWEST AIRLINES, INC., ANNOUNCE SETTLEMENT OF DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION SUIT

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. - The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and Northwest Airlines, Inc. (Northwest) today announced the settlement of a lawsuit under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). EEOC's lawsuit, filed on April 25, 2001, alleged that Northwest excluded applicants for airport ramp equipment service employee and cleaner positions if they had epilepsy or insulin-dependent diabetes. Northwest specifically denies the allegations and believes that its hiring processes are and were proper, but is voluntarily entering into the settlement to avoid protracted litigation.

A key element of the agreement is that Northwest will offer an individualized assessment of the current ability of an airport ramp position applicant with insulin-dependent diabetes or a seizure disorder to safely perform, with or without reasonable accommodation, the job's essential functions. Northwest also will provide a settlement fund of \$510,000 for distribution among 28 individuals for whom the EEOC was seeking relief.

Northwest states that it has a longstanding practice of providing an individualized assessment for applicants applying for airport ramp positions. Northwest is settling this case to expeditiously resolve the matter and avoid protracted litigation, but also because the procedures in the agreement reaffirm and are consistent with its commitment to equal employment opportunity.

Chester V. Bailey, District Director of the Milwaukee District Office, said "This lawsuit was an important reminder to employers that the ADA requires that they give individualized assessments to their employees with disabilities to determine whether they could perform their jobs with or without reasonable accommodation. We are pleased to have been able to work with Northwest Airlines to reach settlement terms that assure that applicants are getting the individualized attention that they deserve."

The EEOC enforces Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, and national origin; the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, which prohibits discrimination against individuals 40 years of age or older; sections of the Civil Rights Act of 1991; the Equal Pay Act; Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in the private sector and state and local governments; and the Rehabilitation Act's prohibitions against disability discrimination in the federal government. Further information about the agency is available on its web site at [www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov).

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