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JAN: Job Accommodation Network

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2 - When New Technologies Hurt

Technology has indisputably opened up doors for many people with disabilities. But, there is a downside to many new technologies; many of the new technologies give off electromagnetic radiation. This radiation may come from ultraviolet emanating from cheap light sources, computer monitors, and plasma TV's; wireless devices giving off radio waves and microwaves, and wired/electronic appliances giving off radio-frequency electromagnetic fields.

For some people who are hypersensitive to these forms of radiation, exposure can mean anything from migraines to gastrointestinal symptoms to lapses in concentration and memory, among other things.

Just as in situations where exposure to fragrances/chemicals can trigger an exacerbation of symptoms, the best accommodation is often to use [telework](#).

When worksite presence is necessary, potential accommodations can include:

- Shielding the building, a particular area of the building, or an office from electromagnetic radiation;
- Shielding electronic equipment and electrical cords;
- Providing a cell phone with a long wire pulling radiation away from the body;
- Providing cell phone shielding for hand use or when stored in a pocket;
- Providing a low electromagnetic field telephone for work;
- Allowing manual communication via written notes or typewriter for work product;
- Providing alternative lighting, or ultraviolet (UV) filtering for compact fluorescent lamp (CFL) or halogen lights; and
- Providing computer screen and phone screen UV filters.

Check out more helpful hints in JAN's new publication [Effective Accommodation Practices \(EAP\) Series: Job Accommodations for People with Electrical Sensitivity](#).