

# Spinal Cord Injury Survivor Job Description

**For the position of a spinal cord injury (SCI) survivor**, we are looking for a rare blend of inherent fortitude, on-the-job education, an ability to both plan long-term and be flexible in oh-crap situations. Key characteristics include the ability to be stubbornly self-sufficient yet humbly dependent on others. This position requires a high level of dedication and perseverance to succeed.

## **Spinal Cord Injury Survivor Job Responsibilities:**

- Develops an understanding of the physical impact of SCI (neurological, urological, gastroenterological, skin care, nutrition, reproductive health, etc.) and educates medical professionals on these issues as needed.
- Adapts to a new way of life, all while grieving tangible and intangible losses, possibly without the support of family or friends.
- Interprets insurance coding and billing; reviews every line of all bills from hospitals, doctors, labs, and DME providers for double billing and balance billing.
- Maintains one's presence of mind while arguing with the aforementioned providers concerning their mistakes. This must be accomplished while multi-tasking on "real life" responsibilities during business hours as one waits on hold.
- Initiates follow-up calls to ensure billing issues have been resolved and not improperly turned over to collections.
- Proves that one is, indeed, disabled, even after years of paralysis, because insurance companies and the government believe in miraculous healing more than you do.
- Repeatedly harasses (or preferably, calls), doctors, insurance companies, government employees, and DME companies until required paperwork is submitted in full in a timely manner.
- Recruits, hires, trains, and fires personal care attendants. This responsibility requires knowledge of tax and employment laws.
- Obtains a working knowledge of federal and state laws concerning disability benefits, and successfully stays at—or under—the poverty level, or achieves insane wealth; a comfortable middle-class lifestyle is rarely an option.
- Must drive a vehicle that costs \$90,000; unfortunately, the vehicle must be a minivan.
- Updates knowledge by remaining aware of new treatments, participates in educational opportunities, reads professional publications, and maintains personal networks with the SCI community.
- Performs the above duties without the understanding of family, friends, and coworkers.

## **Work Hours & Benefits**

Work hours are 24 hours a day, seven days a week. No vacation time is offered. On the off-chance one has the opportunity to take a vacation, one must plan to pay double what an able-bodied peer pays due to the need for personal care, accessible vehicles, and accessible accommodations.

## Required Skills:

- Ability to handle multiple tasks with limited time and energy
- Capacity to function with chronic pain
- Plan one's life around other's schedules, yet be flexible when their plans change
- Explain to drivers who do not know how to park in between lines the importance of an access aisle, yet keep the entire conversation from leaving one's lips since it might cause a confrontation
- Repeatedly tell the story of how you were injured—or if you are a smart aleck, creatively invent a new version every time someone asks you why you use a wheelchair
- Pleasantly smile at strangers in stores—without creeping them out—to ask if they can reach the product on the top shelf
- Proficiency with the SCI sub-culture; this includes integrating bladder and bowel issues into dinner conversations
- Fluency in the vocabulary of spinal cord injury terminology, including comfortably using the terms *gimp*, *dig stim*, *cath*, and *invol* in everyday dialogue

## Education, Experience, and Other Recommendations

- Degrees in medicine, nursing, physical and occupational therapy, finance or accounting, social work, human resources, and disability history and law are highly recommended; if the applicant does not currently have these degrees, this knowledge will be obtained throughout the span of this position whether or not it's desired
- Previous stressful or traumatic experience where resilience has been gained is a plus
- Ability to adapt, modify, or jerry-rig every inch of the house and all of one's possessions—or the financial freedom to buy everything to meet one's accessibility needs

## How to apply (if applicable):

Few people apply for this role, however, over 18,000 new positions are filled each year in the United States. Discrimination is prohibited based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or age.

The person brave enough to take on this role will reap dividends of emotional growth. An added benefit is meeting incredible people throughout the course of your assignment.

