



Fair Housing:  
It's the Law!

## FAIR HOUSING TIP OF THE MONTH

### REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

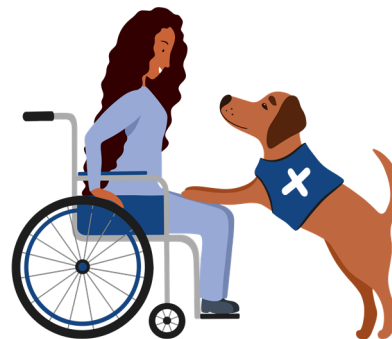
#### WHAT IS A REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION?

Fair housing laws require landlords and housing providers to make accommodations—changes in rules, policies, or procedures—to allow tenants with disabilities the equal opportunity to use and enjoy their housing.

A landlord cannot simply deny an accommodation—they must engage with the tenant to try and find a solution that meets the tenant's disability-related needs.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- ⇒ Emotional Support Animals
- ⇒ Accessible Parking Spaces
- ⇒ Expedited Repairs
- ⇒ Permission for Live-in Caretakers



#### DO I QUALIFY FOR A REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION?

Any person with a disability is eligible to request a reasonable accommodation.

In California, a person with a disability is defined as someone who has any mental, physical, or psychological disorder or condition that limits a major life activity. In other words, if you have a condition which makes physical, mental, or social activities difficult for you, you may be eligible to request an accommodation.



#### HOW DO I REQUEST A REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION?

Requesting a reasonable accommodation is more simple than you may think! To request a reasonable accommodation, you need to ask your landlord for the accommodation and explain why you need it. Someone else, such as a family member or friend, can also ask for the accommodation on your behalf. The request can be made through conversation, but it is recommended that you make a written statement including a description of the accommodation you need and how that accommodation relates to your disability.

# FAIR HOUSING TIP OF THE MONTH

## MORE INFORMATION ON REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

### WHAT KIND OF LANGUAGE SHOULD A REQUEST INCLUDE?

Under fair housing laws, your accommodation must be directly connected to your disability. The language of your request letter should show how your disability limits your ability to enjoy your residence, as well as how the accommodation will reduce or eliminate these effects.

For example, for a tenant that is sensitive to loud noises, this language may be appropriate:

*I have a disability which causes severe anxiety. This anxiety can result in debilitating panic attacks which can be triggered by loud noises. My apartment is in a complex located in a very busy area with a lot of loud traffic noise, and my unit faces the street. I have been experiencing regular panic attacks due to the street noise, and these attacks would be less frequent if my unit was not so close to the street. I am requesting to move to a unit that is not streetside, so that these symptoms can be reduced.*

### WHAT IF MY LANDLORD ASKS FOR PROOF?

If your disability is obvious (for example, you use a walker due to a disability), your landlord cannot demand proof that you are disabled. Neither can your landlord demand proof if they are already aware of your disability. **HOWEVER**, if your disability is not obvious or already known to them, landlords and housing providers are entitled to ask for verification under fair housing laws.

In that case, you may be able to provide proof of disability yourself – such as a letter showing you receive Social Security disability benefits. Even so, it is often best to obtain a letter from a healthcare or service provider (such as a doctor or therapist) verifying your disability and need for an accommodation.

### NEED HELP?

We understand that it can be daunting to request an accommodation and that not every person may feel comfortable making such a request. If this process seems too complicated – or your disability makes it difficult to communicate your needs – don't give up! There are professionals who can help.

You can reach out to a legal aid organization for assistance, such as Mental Health Advocacy Services, Inc. (MHAS). We have experience aiding our clients in requesting reasonable accommodations. If you have a mental health disability, we may be able to assist you. You can reach MHAS by phone at (213) 389-2077 or by email at [info@mhas-la.org](mailto:info@mhas-la.org).

If you have already requested an accommodation and your landlord is refusing to consider your request, you may want to file a complaint with the California Civil Rights Department. Their intake information can be found at <https://calcivilrights.ca.gov/complaintprocess>.

Please note that the information provided here is meant to help, but it is not a replacement for legal advice and counsel. **If you have any questions about your legal situation, we strongly encourage you to reach out to a legal expert.**

The Fair Housing Tip of the Month campaign is based on work supported by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) under FHIP Grant #FEOI220036. Any opinion, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of HUD.