



## Reasonable Accommodations: Do You Need Your Landlord to Make a Change Because of Your Disability?

If you have a disability that makes it hard for you to live in, find or keep an apartment you may ask a landlord to make changes that would make it easier for you to live there. This is called "reasonable accommodation."

### Reasonable Accommodation

The law says that landlords have to make accommodations (changes) in their rules, procedures or policies that let people with disabilities have equal use and enjoyment of housing. But the changes have to be "reasonable."

A change is reasonable if it is necessary, does not cost the landlord a lot of money or other resources, and if it does not cause a fundamental change in the nature of the landlord's business.



### Example of a Reasonable Accommodation #1

Maria gets her SSI check on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of each month. She has no control over when she gets her check. Maria gets SSI because of a disability. The landlord charges a late fee for any rent payments made after the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month. Maria asked the landlord to waive the late fee each month as a reasonable accommodation of disability. Maria agreed to pay the rent no later than the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month. The landlord has to agree to accommodation requests that are reasonable.

### Example of a Reasonable Accommodation #2

Betty has recently been diagnosed with bipolar disorder. Before she was diagnosed, she missed work many times due to severe mood swings and depression. Because of her poor performance at work, Betty was fired from her job, and could not pay rent. Now she has an eviction on her record from that time.

Betty is looking for a new home. She applied at an apartment that has a policy against renting to anyone with an eviction record. Betty could ask for a "reasonable accommodation." She could ask the landlord to adjust the rules in her case because her eviction happened because of her mental illness.

But Betty has to give the landlord some kind of guarantee that she can follow the lease and pay her rent in the future. This could be things like proof that she is controlling her bipolar disorder with medication or a letter from her boss stating that she is reliable and has not missed work. She could also offer to pay an extra damage deposit.

### How do I know if I should ask for a reasonable accommodation?

Answer the following questions:

	YES	NO
Are you having problems getting or staying in your home <b>because of</b> your disability?		
Will the change you are asking for let you get an apartment or help you to be able to stay in your apartment?		
Will you be able to follow your lease if the change is made?		
After the change, can you make sure your behavior will not threaten the health and safety and property of others in the building?		

**If you answer YES to all 4, then you should ask for a reasonable accommodation.**

### How do I ask for a reasonable accommodation?

If you want to ask for a reasonable accommodation, if possible, you should:

1. Put your request in writing and keep a copy for yourself
2. Attach any documents or letters of reference that help prove and support your request

Once you have asked for the accommodation, it is up to the landlord to accept it or prove why it is not disability-related, necessary, or reasonable.

Remember, there is no easy right or wrong answer to the questions about reasonable accommodations. Try to think of things you can ask for that the landlord will be okay with so that you can get or keep your home. This is your chance to be creative!



### What if the landlord will not give me a reasonable accommodation?

If you answered YES to the 4 questions above and have made your request for a reasonable accommodation BUT the landlord refuses to make any changes, it may be a case of illegal housing discrimination.

**Low income, elderly and disabled Minnesotans, call your local legal aid office or:**

**Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid**  
**(612) 334-5970**  
TDD – (612) 332-4668

**Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services**  
**(651) 222-4731**

You can also look for help from government agencies that enforce housing discrimination laws. They will investigate for free.

**MN Department of Human Rights**  
Freeman Building  
625 Robert St North  
St. Paul, MN 55155

**MN Department of Human Rights – St Cloud**  
City Hall  
400 Second St South  
St. Cloud, MN 56301

Phone: (651) 539-1100 or 1(800) 657-3704  
TTY: (651) 296-1283

Phone: (320) 650-3133

[www.mn.gov/mdhr/](http://www.mn.gov/mdhr/)

**Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**

77 West Jackson Boulevard  
Chicago, IL 60604-3507  
Phone: (800) 765-9372

[www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov)

**Whatever you do, act fast. In most cases, you need to file a complaint or lawsuit within 1 or sometimes 2 years.**



***Fact Sheets are legal information NOT legal advice. See a lawyer for advice.***

*Don't use this fact sheet if it is more than 1 year old. Ask us for updates, a fact sheet list, or alternate formats.*

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