



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

Can I ask for changes in my home because of my 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 3rd 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 1st of the month. So as a reasonable accommodation Maria asked the landlord to let her have until the 5th of each month to pay rent. She also asked that she won't be charged a late fee unless she pays her rent after the 5th. 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 because of 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 won't give me a reasonable accommodation?

If you answered YES to the 4 questions above and asked 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.

In the metro:

Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid
(612) 334-5970

Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services
1-(877) 696-6529

Outside the metro? Find your local legal aid office at 1-(877) 696-6529 (877-MY-MN-LAW).

Or look for help from other programs at www.lawhelpmn.org/providers-and-clinics.

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

MN Department of Human Rights

Griggs Midway Building
540 Fairview Ave North, Suite 201
St. Paul, Minnesota 55104

Phone: (651) 539-1100 or 1(800) 657-3704
MN Relay: 711 or 1(800) 627-3529

MN Department of Human Rights – St Cloud

City Hall
400 Second St South
St. Cloud, MN 56301

Phone: (320) 407-8288

For both offices:

Discrimination helpline: 1-(833) 454-0148

Email at: info.mdhr@state.mn.us

www.mn.gov/mdhr/

Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

Minneapolis Field Office
212 Third Ave South, Suite 150
Minneapolis MN 55401

Phone: (612) 370-3000

Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

77 West Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, IL 60604-3507

Phone: (800) 765-9372



For both offices: 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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