

Requesting Housing Accommodations and Modifications

The Fair Housing Act

The Fair Housing Act¹ (FHA) protects people with disabilities from being treated differently than others in housing situations. Under the FHA, people with disabilities also have the additional rights to ask for reasonable accommodations and reasonable modifications.

(¹ 42 U.S.C. § 3601 et al. The federal protected classes are race, color, sex, national origin, familial status, religion, and disability.)

Reasonable Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations are changes in rules, policies, or services that allow a person with a disability to use and enjoy their home just like anyone else. If you ask for a change, and it is reasonable, the landlord should allow you to do it.

Examples of reasonable accommodations include:

- **Giving notices in large print** to people who are blind or have poor eyesight.
- **Giving someone who uses a wheelchair** an assigned parking space even if the landlord has a “no assigned parking” rule.

Reasonable modifications are physical changes made to the structure of the dwelling unit and/or common areas.

Some examples of reasonable modifications are:

- **Lowering cabinets**, light switches, and
- **Widening doorways** for use by someone in a wheelchair.
- **Installing curb cuts** in front of an accessible parking space.

Reasonable modifications can be requested for facility common areas, i.e. the lobby, main entrance, or laundry room, as well as to individual units. If you make a request for a modification, you should expect to pay for the changes in most situations.

Granting Accommodations/Modifications

Under the FHA, landlords must allow, but are not required to pay for accommodations or modifications if they help someone with a disability to use and enjoy their home and/or the common areas. You must obtain permission from your landlord before making any changes to your home or a common area, or if you want an exception to a rule or policy.

For More Information

If you have further questions, or would like more information in general, please contact Disability Rights Montana. Our services are offered statewide and free of charge.

Call 1-800-245-4743 or visit our office to speak confidentially with an Advocate. Office hours are Monday-Friday, 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM.



1022 Chestnut Street
Helena, Montana 59601
(800) 245-4743
DisabilityRightsMT.org
Advocate@DisabilityRightsMT.org

This fact sheet has general information. It is not intended as legal advice. Only an attorney can give you legal advice to help you with a problem or answer a question.

Date
Name of building manager
Building manager's address

RE: Reasonable accommodation for my disability

Dear **(building manager's name)**,

I live at **(address)** in **(unit number)** and have lived there since **(date)**. I am a qualified individual with a disability, as defined by the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988.

Our building's rules state **(XXX)**. Due to my disability, I need the following accommodations: **(list accommodation needs)**. A **(medical provider, therapist, or other professional)** has prescribed this accommodation for my disability. I would like to meet with you to discuss these, and any other accommodations, that will enable me to have an equal opportunity to live in and enjoy this residence.

Please let me know what, if any, additional information you need from my health care provider in order to better understand my disability and the reasonable accommodation(s) I am requesting.

The Fair Housing Amendments Act 1988 provides that it is unlawful discrimination to deny a person with a disability a reasonable accommodation of an existing building rule or policy if such an accommodation may be necessary to afford such a person full enjoyment of the premises.

Please keep this request for accommodation confidential, as required by federal law. Please contact me within the next ten (10) days to schedule a mutually convenient time to discuss this important issue. I look forward to your response and appreciate your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

(Your signature with name printed below it.)