

# Know Your Rights: Reasonable Accommodations

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If you are a tenant and you need to make modifications to your living space due to a disability, here is some information on your rights to reasonable accommodations:

- **Your Right (42 USC §3604(f), VA Code §36-96.3):** Tenants with disabilities can ask for exceptions to rules or physical modifications of an apartment if those changes are necessary, because of the tenant's disability. For example, a tenant who has asthma can ask to be allowed to install a window air conditioning unit in their apartment to help them breathe.
- **What you have to do:** (1) Tell the landlord that you, or someone in your family, has a disability. (2) Tell them what change you need to be made and, (3) tell them why the change is necessary because of your disability. If the disability is not obvious, you can be required to provide documentation from a health provider that the person has a disability and that the accommodation or modification is needed. (4) then you can make the modification. The tenant must make the modification, but the landlord is obligated to allow it. In general, the tenant is responsible for making the modification and paying any cost associated with it.
- **It's recommended that you do this in writing and give the landlord a deadline (usually a few weeks) to respond.** If the landlord does not grant the reasonable modification or accommodation request you can file a complaint with the Virginia Fair Housing Office, the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, or in state or federal court.
- **Note:** You cannot ask for anything that is outside what a landlord normally does or that would create a serious burden for the landlord (for example, you cannot ask for the landlord to buy your groceries).

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If you can have further questions, or if your landlord takes you to court after using this right, contact us at one of the numbers below:

**Northern Virginia:**  
(703) 778-3450

**Richmond/Petersburg:**  
(804) 643-1086

**Charlottesville:**  
(434) 977-0553