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REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

When the Rules Have to Bend



California housing providers can enforce reasonable rules. But fair housing laws may require an exception when necessary to give a person with a disability an equal opportunity to use and enjoy their housing.

1 RECOGNIZE THE REQUEST

No magic words are required. A resident doesn't necessarily have to say "reasonable accommodation," use a particular form, or even make the request in writing.

2 VERIFY — BUT DON'T OVERREACH

If the disability or need isn't apparent, limited verification may be appropriate. Don't demand a diagnosis, complete medical records, or more information than necessary.

3 LOOK FOR THE CONNECTION

There must be a relationship between the disability and the requested accommodation. If the connection isn't clear, seek appropriate clarification before reaching a conclusion.

4 ENGAGE BEFORE SAYING NO

If the requested accommodation cannot be granted as proposed, consider whether another effective solution exists. California law requires a timely, good-faith interactive process where appropriate.

5 KNOW THE LIMITS

Reasonable accommodations can require exceptions to ordinary rules involving animals, parking, occupants, fees and other housing practices. But they need not impose an undue financial or administrative burden or fundamentally alter the housing provider's operations.

WATCH THE SURCHARGE

Don't charge a resident an additional fee, deposit, or financial contribution simply as a condition of receiving a reasonable accommodation.

An accommodation is a right — not a revenue opportunity.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Requiring your own form
- Asking for unnecessary medical information
- Ignoring an oral request
- Charging an accommodation fee
- Denying before considering alternatives