

# How to Get Your Landlord to Say **Yes!** to Your ESA



An instructional guide to getting your  
emotional support animal accepted  
by your landlord.

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## Nervous about revealing your emotional support animal (ESA) to your landlord?

The good news is that most of the time housing providers will accept your ESA letter without any hassle.

Most landlords understand their obligations under [federal and state ESA laws](#) and are happy to comply. Unfortunately, some landlords can be a bit more difficult.

The explanation may be innocent: the landlord might simply just be unaware that ESA laws exist, in which case you can gently point them out. There are a few housing providers, however, that may try to deliberately mislead or intimidate you into not bringing your ESA home.

This instructional guide is for anyone about to disclose to their landlord that they have an emotional support animal. We'll include practical advice and tips on what to do if your landlord is being difficult about your request.



# The First (and Most Important) Step: **Get an ESA Letter!**

Before you say anything to your landlord, the first thing you should do is make sure you are prepared with the proper documentation for your emotional support animal. Under federal housing guidelines, there is only one way to prove that you own an emotional support animal and not just a regular pet: with a legitimate ESA letter.

An [ESA letter](#) is a document signed by a licensed healthcare professional who has evaluated your mental health. An ESA letter states that you have a qualifying health condition and that an emotional support animal provides comfort for your mental or emotional disorder.

With an ESA letter, you are allowed to live in no-pets buildings without having to pay any extra pet fee or deposit. Your emotional support animal is also exempt from breed, size, and weight limitations.

Under HUD's rules, an ESA letter is all you need to provide to your landlord as proof of your need for an emotional support animal. So before you mention your emotional support animal to your landlord, you should prepare by qualifying for an ESA letter.



If you need an ESA letter and don't know where to turn, ESA Doctors is your best option online. ESA Doctors has helped clients since 2015 and has [5-star reviews from thousands of clients](#). They are also fully accredited by the BBB with an A+ rating.

[ESA Doctors](#) will connect you to a healthcare professional specializing in ESA letters who is licensed for your state. The entire process is done remotely, with no expensive office visits.

# What Should You Do After Getting Your ESA Letter?

## Do I really have to disclose my ESA?

Many wonder if they need to tell their landlord about their emotional support animal at all. They're worried their landlord will respond negatively or give them a hard time.

As an ESA owner, you do have to reveal to your landlord that you have an emotional support animal. That's especially true if you live in a building that bans all pets.

If you're worried about your landlord's reaction, just remember that federal

law has your back. Landlords must reasonably accommodate an ESA even if the tenant discloses the animal after signing their lease.

Once you have your ESA letter, you can send your landlord a copy by email or give them a printout (you do not need an original signed version). You should include a message stating that you are requesting accommodation of your emotional support animal under HUD's guidelines and are submitting an ESA letter as proof.



# Tips for Getting your Landlord to Say Yes

## 1. Give your landlord a heads up

If you just send your landlord your ESA letter without context, they might feel blindsided by the request. It can help to have a short call first or send a message informing them that you plan to bring home an emotional support animal. You can then formally follow up with your ESA letter.

Landlords are much more receptive if they feel you are being open with them about your plans. Housing providers like being kept in the loop about what's happening with their tenants, and a simple message previewing your ESA can go a long way.

## 2. Be friendly but firm

Many assume the worst and think their landlords will react badly to their ESA request. Perhaps in anticipation of this, some tenants will take an overly aggressive approach.

The truth is most landlords are happy to comply with their Fair Housing obligations and are sympathetic to the needs of their tenants. The majority of ESA owners don't have any trouble dealing with their landlords.

Even if your landlord does give you a hard time, a friendly demeanor and smile can go a long way. Don't be a pushover, but don't start out the gate too aggressively either. Be kind but professional.



### 3. Demonstrate your ESA is safe and clean

Your landlord will feel much better about your emotional support animal if they know it won't cause any headaches. You should reassure your landlord that your ESA is well trained and healthy and will not be a nuisance to other tenants.

You should also clean up after your ESA's mess and keep your animal hygienic. A landlord will be much more inclined to allow your ESA if they're confident it won't damage property or lead to complaints from the neighbors.



### 4. Educate your landlord about ESA Rules

Sometimes landlords are taken aback by an ESA request simply because they don't understand ESA rules. Your landlord might not be giving you a hard time; they might just be completely unaware that ESAs are protected by housing law.

It's also very common for landlords to misunderstand housing laws. For example, sometimes they insist on seeing a registration

or certificate for your ESA. Or they will confuse emotional support animal laws with service dog rules. In these situations, the best approach is to gently point out the relevant laws regarding emotional support animals to your landlord. You will also have a lot more credibility if you are familiar with ESA rules and can assert your rights confidently.

### 5. Be willing to engage in a dialogue

HUD's guidelines encourage landlords and tenants to cooperate and try to work through any issues regarding an ESA request. Many tenants are discouraged if a landlord initially rejects their ESA request.

It may turn out that your landlord's concerns can be easily addressed. They might be ignorant of ESA laws, in which case you can guide them

to the relevant rules. They might be imagining the worst about your animal, which you can address by showing how well-behaved and loving your ESA is.

Many conflicts between tenants and landlords can be resolved through a friendly conversation. Take the time to understand why your landlord is being hesitant, and see if you can work to address their pain points.





# Common Reasons Landlords Reject ESAs & **How to Respond**

## 1.

**My landlord wants to see a registration, license, vest, ID card, or certificate.**

This is a common mistake landlords make. Under HUD guidelines, the only document a tenant needs to prove that their animal is an emotional support animal is an [ESA letter for housing](#) from a licensed healthcare professional.

There is no such thing as an official registry for ESAs or national certification program. ESAs also do not have special licenses. The only license you may need is one applicable to all animals in your area, such as a dog license.

You also do not need accessories like ID cards and vests – these items can be helpful, but they are not required.

## 2.

**My landlord asked me to complete a form first.**

Under HUD guidelines, landlords cannot ask you to complete a separate form after submitting an ESA letter. This was designed to prevent landlords from putting up obstacles for tenants with ESAs. More importantly, a landlord can never ask about your specific mental health condition or medical history. You have a right to privacy regarding your health and need for an ESA.

An ESA letter should contain everything your landlord needs to verify your ESA request. A form that demands additional information may violate HUD's rules.

## 3.

**My landlord says no pets are allowed.**

This is a pretty basic point that a small number of landlords may not understand: ESAs are exempt from pet limitations. Even if the building bans all pets and the lease states that animals are not allowed, an ESA must still be reasonably accommodated.

Under [Fair Housing rules](#), ESAs are not considered pets; they are assistance animals that help people with mental health disabilities.

#### 4.

### My landlord says that my ESA is dangerous.

Landlords can [rightfully deny an ESA](#) if there is evidence that the ESA poses a threat to the health or safety of others. However, they cannot reject an ESA just because they have certain preconceived notions about your ESA.

If your landlord claims your ESA is a safety or health threat or has damaged property, they must have evidence to support their claim. They cannot just rely on stereotypes about certain breeds or make assumptions due to your ESA's size.

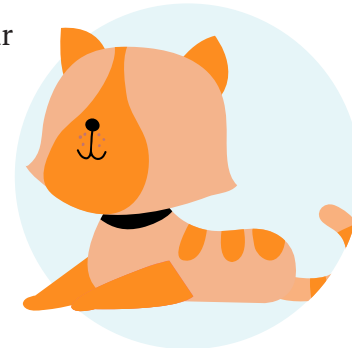
In these situations, you should try to demonstrate to your landlord that your ESA is well-behaved, clean, and up to date on vaccinations.

#### 5.

### My landlord is ignoring my ESA request.

If your landlord is giving you the silent treatment after submitting your ESA letter, you should keep in mind that HUD's guidelines obligate them to respond promptly. That means they should reply to your ESA request within 10 days.

They should respond by either accepting your request or giving you a valid exemption for denial under HUD's rules. If your landlord is stonewalling you, gently remind them that they are obligated to provide a response.



#### 6.

### My landlord says I have too many ESAs.

Under HUD's rules, tenants are allowed to have more than one emotional support animal. However, each ESA must be covered by an ESA letter, and the healthcare professional must determine a specific need for more than one ESA.

However, considerations regarding comfort and safety may limit the number of ESAs you can have. For example, if your living space is too small to accommodate the number of ESAs you are requesting, your landlord may raise that as a safety or health issue.

It is quite common, however, for tenants to have more than one ESA. If that applies to you, make sure your ESA letter covers each of your ESAs, not just one.



# Final Thoughts

Requesting ESA accommodation from your landlord doesn't have to be a nerve-wracking experience. Most ESA owners find that the anticipation is worse than reality. Most landlords are happy to fulfill their Fair Housing duties and accommodate ESAs.

In instances where the landlord raises an objection, just remember that there is probably a way to come to a compromise with your landlord or change their mind. In many scenarios, the landlord is unaware of what ESA rules say, and it will be your job to be a friendly guide.

If all else has failed and your landlord denies your ESA without a valid reason, at that point, you can consider filing a complaint with HUD directly. Many landlords have been sued by the government for failing to comply with housing rules. This should, however, be a last resort option when all other avenues have failed.

Remember, the law protects your rights as an ESA owner. When dealing with a landlord, be friendly, but firm, and demonstrate you understand how federal and state laws protect you.



ESA Doctors has helped over 100,000 clients since 2015 while maintaining top marks from the [BBB](#) and [ShopperApproved](#). We care about our clients and their assistance animals deeply because our ESAs and service animals take care of us, too. **Continue your ESA knowledge journey – check out these top articles on [our blog](#):**



[How to Certify an Emotional Support Dog](#)



[How to Ask a Doctor for an Emotional Support Animal Letter](#)



[Emotional Support Cat Registration Guide](#)



[How to Get an Emotional Support Animal](#)



[Where Can I Take Emotional Support Animals?](#)



[Emotional Support Animal Laws You Should Know](#)

## Are you a first time ESA letter applicant or simply looking to renew your letter?

We would like to help! You can [read more about our process here](#).



## Ready to apply for an ESA letter?

[Start by filling out our quick questionnaire](#) to see if you qualify for a legitimate ESA letter from a licensed health care professional.



**Thousands of pet owners trust and love ESA Doctors!**



Marie S. says



“They truly care about you and your ESA. My landlord was threatening to kick out my dog but the support team gave me helpful tips and I was able to fight back and the therapist had my back the entire time. They are a true ally to people like me that need an ESA for an invisible disability.”

Jake M. says



“I've literally never reviewed a business so highly! They not only accurately assess your situation, but they also do it in such an efficient way! I had so many questions, and they were all answered extremely quick. They were immensely helpful! Definitely will highly recommend them to anyone that needs it!”