

**FAIR HOUSING CENTER
of the
LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF SAN DIEGO, INC.**



Fair Housing News

Reasonable Modifications and Requirements Placed on Requesting Tenants

A reasonable modification is defined as:

A reasonable modification is a structural change made to existing premises, occupied or to be occupied by a person with a disability, in order to afford such person full enjoyment of the premises. Reasonable modifications can include structural changes to interiors and exteriors of dwellings and to common and public use areas. (Joint Statement of the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Justice, *Reasonable Modifications Under the Fair Housing Act*, pg. 3 (March 5, 2008)).

A tenant renting from a private housing provider is responsible for paying the cost of the reasonable modification. A housing provider that receives federal financial assistance is responsible to pay for the cost of the reasonable modification.

One common reasonable modification is a tenant asking for a ramp to enter his or her rental unit. Persons who use wheelchairs or who have difficulty walking up steps may need a ramp if the only entrance to his or her unit has a step(s) or large threshold into the unit. Housing providers may recognize the need of the tenant to have a ramp, but deny the reasonable modification request because the housing provider is concerned about the construction of the ramp or its aesthetics.

If a permanent ramp is being installed, the housing provider can ask the tenant to have it performed in a workman-like manner, which usually means involving a licensed contractor to install the ramp. However, the housing provider cannot require the tenant to use a specific contractor or other professional.

A housing provider cannot require the tenant to only use a certain kind of ramp. If the tenant is going to install a ramp that the housing provider does not like for its aesthetics, the housing provider may pay the difference to install a ramp the housing provider prefers.

**For More Information please call:
The Legal Aid Society of San Diego, Inc.**



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