



Housing Opportunities Made Equal

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Fair Housing and Hoarding Fact Sheet

1. What is Fair Housing?

Fair housing is a set of principles and laws which mandate equal access and opportunity in housing. Fair housing covers persons who are members of a protected class which are groups of persons and their families that historically have experienced discrimination. Under the Federal Fair Housing Act, those classes are race/color, religion, national origin, gender, disability, and families with children.

2. What is hoarding?

Compulsive hoarding is (Frost & Hartl, 1996):

- the acquisition of, and failure to discard, a large number of possessions that appear to be useless or of limited value;
- living spaces that are sufficiently cluttered so as to preclude activities for which those spaces were designed;
- the presence of significant distress or impairment in functioning caused by the hoarding.

3. Why would persons who hoard be covered under fair housing laws?

Someone who is a compulsive hoarder meets the definition of disability under federal fair housing laws because it is a mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of the person's major life activities.

4. What types of protections does a person with a disability have under fair housing laws?

Hoarders, as persons with disabilities, have the right to request a reasonable accommodation. A reasonable accommodation is a request for a waiver or change in policies, practices, procedures and services to provide equal access and opportunity in housing for persons with disabilities. There must be a direct connection between the person's disability and the reasonable accommodation request.

5. What is an example of a reasonable accommodation that could assist a person whose housing is at risk due to hoarding?

If the housing provider is considering eviction of a person with a disability due to the hoarding, a remedy plan can be offered as a reasonable accommodation to preserve the tenancy. This remedy plan could include support services plus an individualized schedule for cleanup and inspections.

6. Must the housing provider approve a reasonable accommodation request?

The request must be approved as long as it does not cause an undue administrative and financial burden or change the basic nature of the housing program.

7. Who can I call to get help in requesting a reasonable accommodation?

Call Housing Opportunities Made Equal (513-721-4663). We will advise you on making a reasonable accommodation request and help in working with the landlord.