

Landlord's Guide to Verifying ESA / PSD Letters

Know your rights and responsibilities

As a housing provider, you have both an obligation to reasonably accommodate legitimate assistance animals and a right to verify that documentation is genuine. This guide helps you do both correctly.

What a Legitimate Letter Includes

- The evaluating professional's full name, license number, license type, and state
- A statement confirming the tenant has a qualifying condition
- A clinical statement connecting the animal to the tenant's treatment
- A signature and a date of issue (typically within the last 12 months)
- Verifiable contact information or practice letterhead

How to Verify Credentials

- Look up the license number on your state's licensing board website (most are searchable online, free)
- Confirm the license is active and in good standing
- Confirm the professional is licensed in the state where the tenant resides

What You Can & Cannot Ask

You may ask:

- For the ESA/PSD letter itself, if not already provided
- Whether the animal is required because of a disability (in ambiguous cases)

You may not ask:

- ✗ The tenant's specific diagnosis or detailed medical history
- ✗ For the animal to perform a demonstration or task (this applies to service dogs, not ESAs)

Legal Obligations & 2026 Update

Under the Fair Housing Act, housing providers must generally make reasonable accommodations for tenants with legitimate assistance animals. As of May 2026, HUD narrowed federal enforcement specifically for **untrained** ESA denial complaints — but Section 504 (federally-assisted housing), state fair housing laws, and private legal action remain fully in effect. Fee waivers are not automatic: courts have held that tenants must

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demonstrate the waiver is necessary, not simply request it.

This is general information, not legal advice. Consult your own legal counsel for guidance specific to your property and jurisdiction.

■ Red Flags of a Fake Letter

- ✗ No license number, or a license number that doesn't verify on the state board site
- ✗ "Lifetime" validity, or no date of issue at all
- ✗ Reference to an "official registry" or "certification ID" — not a real legal concept in the U.S.
- ✗ Generic, form-letter language with no specifics tied to the individual tenant

Questions about a specific letter? Our support team can help verify documentation issued through ProESALetter. Visit proesaletter.com/contact-us.