



Fair Housing for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing

When we think of Fair Housing rights, we often think of physical accessibility such as ramps and accessible parking. However, the Fair Housing Act and the Virginia Fair Housing Law protect people with all types of disabilities—physical, sensory, mental, intellectual, developmental, etc.

Definition of disability under the Fair Housing Act and Virginia Fair Housing Law

- physical and/or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities,
- record of such an impairment, or
- regarded as having such an impairment.

What protections do I have as a person who is Deaf or hard of hearing?

Equal access to housing and freedom from discrimination

Equal Access to Housing

It is illegal for a landlord or property owner to do any of the following because of your disability:

- Refusing to rent to you or show you available units
- Restricting you to certain units or sections of a building
- Setting a higher rent or security deposit than for others in similar units
- Not allowing you to access onsite facilities (e.g., recreation spaces such as a pool, laundry room)

Freedom from Discrimination

In most situations, a landlord or property owner must allow requests for Reasonable Accommodations (changes in rules and policies) and Modifications (physical changes to your home or common areas) which are necessary for you to have an equal opportunity to access and enjoy your home.

Examples of Reasonable Accommodations and Modifications

- Providing effective communication for all meetings and conversations related to housing matters such as providing interpreters for meetings or offering alternative communication methods like email, text, or video relay services
- Allowing an assistance animal, including an emotional support animal, even if there is a no-pet policy
- Allowing installation of visual alerts for alarms such as the doorbell and smoke detector
- Changing rent due date to coincide with receipt of disability income