

Sample Letter for Emotional Support Animal – Housing

DATE

NAME OF PROFESSIONAL (therapist, physician, psychiatrist, rehabilitation counselor)

ADDRESS

Dear [HOUSING AUTHORITY/LANDLORD]:

[NAME OF TENANT] is my patient, and has been under my care since [DATE]. I am intimately familiar with his/her history and with the functional limitations imposed by his/her disability. He/She meets the definition of disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Fair Housing Act, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Due to mental illness, [FIRST NAME] has certain limitations regarding [SOCIAL INTERACTION/COPING WITH STRESS/ANXIETY, ETC]. In order to help alleviate these difficulties, and to enhance his/her ability to live independently and to fully use and enjoy the dwelling unit you own and/or administer, I am prescribing an emotional support animal that will assist [FIRST NAME] in coping with his/her disability.

I am familiar with the voluminous professional literature concerning the therapeutic benefits of assistance animals for people with disabilities such as that experienced by [FIRST NAME]. Upon request, I will share citations to relevant studies, and would be happy to answer other questions you may have concerning my recommendation that [FULL NAME OF TENANT] have an emotional support animal. Should you have additional question, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Signature

[NAME OF PROFESSIONAL]

Letter for Flying with an ESA

The Department of Transportation (DOT) has set specific guidelines for flying on commercial airlines with an Emotional Support Animal (ESA).

Persons wishing to fly under provisions provided by DOT – ESA rules must have a letter from a licensed mental health professional. The letter must meet the following criteria:

- Must be from a verifiable mental health professional
- Must be printed on the professional's office letterhead
- Must not be more than a year old

The letter must state the following items:

1. The presence of an animal is required to maintain the passenger's treatment or health
2. The passenger has a mental health disability. The diagnosis is not just a mental illness, but a mental illness that substantially limits at least one major life activity. Airlines are not allowed to require the disclosure of the specific mental disability – for example, panic attacks.
3. The mental health professional must state that the indicated passenger is a patient under their personal care. The person must state what type mental health professional they are (psychologist, psychiatrist, clinical social worker, etc.)

Airlines may also request documentation including the following:

- The type of mental health license the professional has
- The license date
- The State issuing the license

You must review the guidelines of the airline you plan on flying in advance to assure that you have made proper arrangements prior to departure of your flight. Failure to follow all guidelines instituted by the airline could revoke your right to fly with an ESA and you may be charged normal pet travel fees or be excluded from flying with your ESA.