

How to Register an Emotional Support Animal

ESA Doctors, Alexi Holford

[View Larger Image](#)



There are no federal, local, or state registration requirements for emotional support animals (ESAs) – you only need a [signed letter](#) from a licensed health professional. Every state also allows you to get an ESA letter online.

If you registered your pet on a website, that does not automatically make them an emotional support animal! In this guide, we'll walk you through these topics:

How to make your pet an official emotional support animal.

What emotional support animal registries are.

Frequently asked questions about ESA registration.

How to “Register” your Emotional Support Animal

The process of registration involves listing your dog, cat, or other pet in an online database that offers an identification number for the animal.

However, being included in one of these registries does not necessarily prove that your pet is an

emotional support animal. The steps to “register” an emotional support animal are:

Meet with a licensed therapist or doctor (it can help to find out beforehand whether they offer ESA evaluations).

Talk openly and honestly about the obstacles you’re facing and your relationship with your animal.

Ask your provider to write you an ESA letter on their letterhead. Make sure the letter is signed, dated, and contains their state license number.

Share your ESA letter with your landlord. There is no need to register your emotional support animal in any government or private registry.

Once you have an ESA letter, you’ll have all the benefits, like being exempt from no-pet policies, no-pet lease provisions, pet fees/deposits, and breed/weight restrictions.



Share this image on your site (copy code below):

Emotional Support Animal Registries

An ESA registry is a site offering to log your animal in a database. These registries are usually harmless except when they trick people into thinking that registration is how you qualify for an emotional support animal.

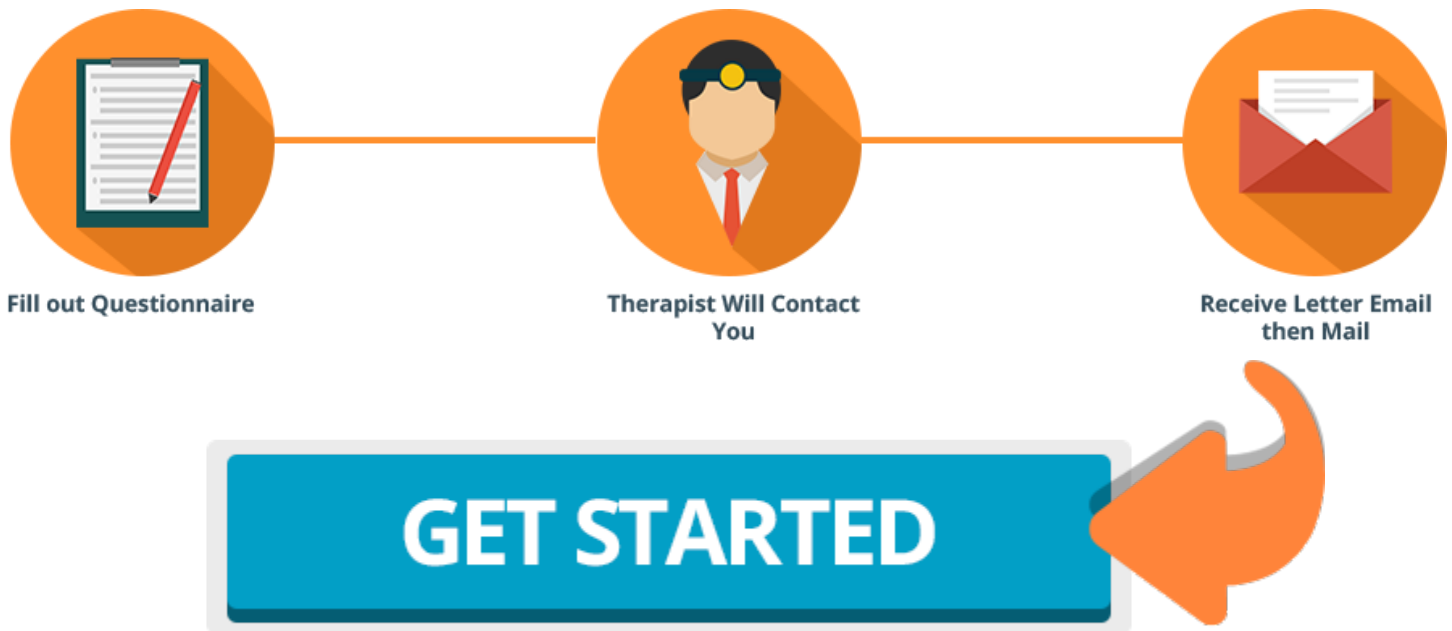
There is no ESA registry recognized by the government. In fact, The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development states in their guidelines that you can’t qualify for an ESA by registering it online:

“Some websites sell...registrations, and licensing documents for assistance animals...In HUD’s experience, such documentation from the internet is not, by itself, sufficient to reliably establish that an individual has a non-observable disability or disability-related need for an assistance animal.”

ESA registration does not give you any legal rights. Some ESA owners voluntarily register their animals online to obtain ID cards or certificates, but these are considered optional accessories and don’t replace ESA letters.

A landlord can’t reject your emotional support animal because it is lacking a registration number or ID (but they can if you don’t have [a proper ESA letter](#)).

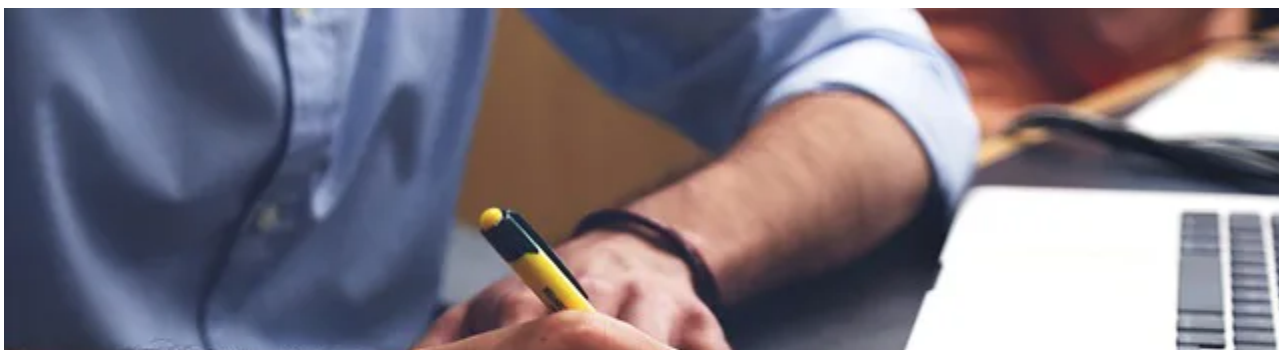
[Click here to get started on qualifying for your ESA letter.](#)

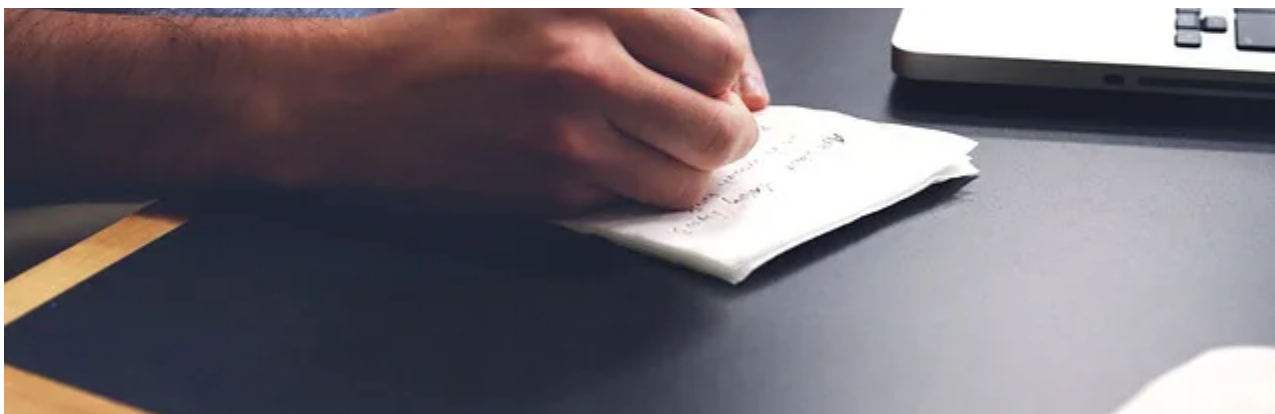


Pet Registration Requirements

If the city you live in has a general pet registration requirement, your emotional support animal is not exempt. For example, all dogs in [Los Angeles County](#) must be licensed and the [same is true in Harris County](#) in Texas.

Make sure to check what your local rules say about registering and licensing your animal, regardless of whether your animal is an ESA or not.





Before following any pet registration, check your local rules and regulations regarding pets and ESAs.

Frequently Asked Questions about Emotional Support Animal Registration

Is there a government registry for emotional support animals?

No, there is no government-run or government-sponsored registry for emotional support animals. There is also no registry for service dogs. Many people mistakenly believe that there is an ADA-approved registry site, but there is not. The misconception comes from the notion that service dogs need to be registered or licensed. The truth is that the government does not keep track of assistance animal owners.

If it's not required, why do owners register their emotional support animals?

Some people register their emotional support animals to show others that their animal is more than just a pet. When you register, you often get an ID card for your ESA. This card can help you easily show people in your building that your animal is an emotional support animal. Remember, carrying a card is completely optional and not required.

Do service dogs need to be registered?

No, service dogs do not have to be registered. There is no government registry that tracks handlers of service dogs. Service dog registration, just like emotional support animal registration, is done on a voluntary basis.

Do ESA letters contain registration numbers?

No, an ESA letter will contain the provider's license number, but it does not need to contain any other special registration or certification numbers.

Do emotional support animal registrations expire?

The more relevant question is when your ESA letter expires. If your ESA letter expires, you no longer qualify for an emotional support animal, and having a registration becomes meaningless.

Ideally, an ESA letter should be no older than a year otherwise the healthcare professional will not validate it without a recent evaluation on file.

Can I use an emotional support animal registration to bring my pet to a store, restaurant, or public place?

No, having an ESA registration does not grant your animal public access rights. Emotional support animals only have rights when it comes to housing and only if you have an ESA letter.

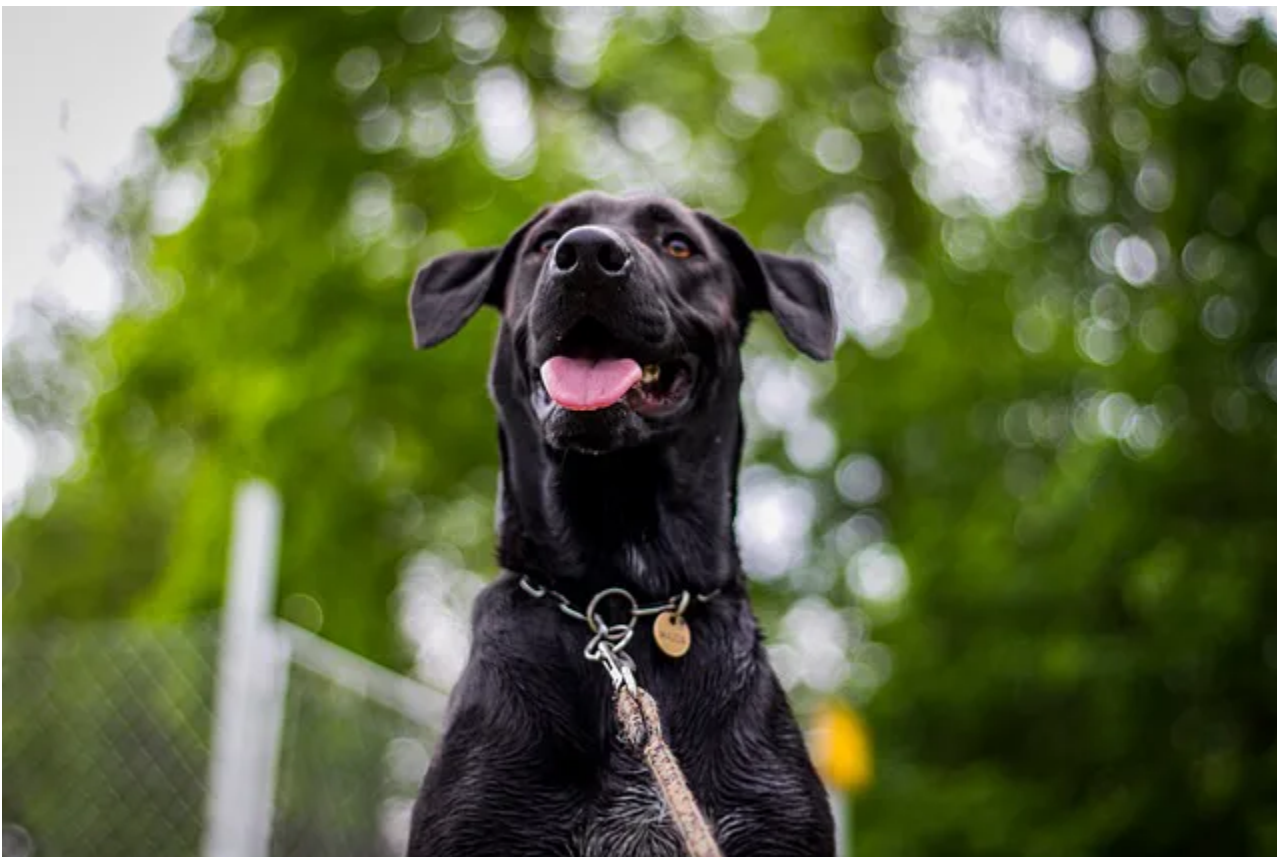
What do I do if my landlord asks for a registration number for my emotional support animal?

If your landlord asks for an ESA registration number, do the following.

Provide your ESA letter.

Share with them [HUD's guidelines](#), which say registration is not required.

Follow up with a friendly email about the encounter and ask for confirmation that your ESA letter has been received.



Registration is NOT required for emotional support dogs!

Register your ESA by qualifying for an ESA letter

START NOW!

Get the love and support you deserve.

About the Author:

The ESA Doctors writing team has extensive experience relating to disability and housing laws, mental health, animal training, and pet health. Each article is fact checked and reviewed by multiple members of our team. Many of the writers have emotional support animals and speak from real life experiences.

Share This Story, Choose Your Platform!