

FACT SHEET: Discrimination in Housing

Issues Facing Seniors

ABOUT CERA

The Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation was founded in 1987. CERA is a charitable not for profit organization that promotes human rights in housing.

DISCRIMINATION

A person may experience discrimination under the Code when they are treated unfairly, denied a benefit or excluded because of a prohibited ground under the Code.

The prohibited grounds related to housing under the Code are: race, ancestry, place of origin, citizenship, ethnic origin, creed (religion), receipt of public assistance, sexual orientation, sex (includes being pregnant, breastfeeding), gender identity, gender expression, marital status, family status, age and disability.

THE HUMAN RIGHTS CODE

The Code is one of the most important pieces of legislation in Ontario. In most cases, it overrules any other law in the province. You cannot contract out of your rights under the Code.

The Code applies to most types of rental housing including private market units, public subsidized units, condominiums, and co-ops. The Code does not apply if you are required to share a bathroom or a kitchen with your landlord or a member of your landlord's family.

WHAT ARE YOUR RIGHTS?

Evicting Tenants

Landlords can only evict tenants for reasons permitted by the *Residential Tenancies Act*. A landlord cannot evict an older tenant who may be paying lower rent due to longer tenure in their rental unit just because they want to attract new tenants at a higher rent.

Income Rules

A landlord should not refuse to rent to you because they do not feel that your income is high enough, or because you receive social assistance including CPP or OAS.

Rent Deposits

Landlords should not ask you for more than one month's rent as a deposit and landlords should not ask you for a security deposit. In some circumstances, requiring a last month's rent deposit may disadvantage people receiving social assistance and this may be discriminatory.

Harassment

It is illegal for a landlord, property manager, superintendent or another occupant of the building to harass you because of your race, sex, age, children, disability, source of income, religion, etc. If you are being harassed by another tenant, you should inform your landlord in writing and your landlord should do something to stop it.

Duty to Accommodate

Landlords have a legal duty to change structures, rules and policies to promote accessibility for tenants with a disability up to point of undue hardship. The Code states that all residents should be able to have full access to, and equal enjoyment of, their residence.

IF YOU EXPERIENCE DISCRIMINATION

Act now! Write everything down including the date, time, what was said, and who was there.

When you are looking for an apartment, bring a friend. This person can be a witness if you experience discrimination. Be sure to fill out the rental application form completely and keep a copy if possible. Remember to write down the apartment address, telephone number, landlord's contact information and details about the rent charged.



**If you've experienced discrimination in housing call CERA!
Our services are free.
We can talk to the landlord and help stop the discrimination.**

**In Toronto:
416-944-0087**

**Outside of Toronto:
1-800-263-1139**

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