

FACT SHEET: Discrimination in Housing Issues Facing Women

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?

Marital Status

A landlord should not refuse to rent to you because you are single, divorced or separated.

Receipt of Social Assistance

Landlords should not refuse to rent to tenants because they are receiving social assistance including Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). Landlords should also not refuse to rent to you because they don't believe your income is high enough. Landlords cannot apply income ratios to tenants.

Children

Landlords should not refuse to rent to you because you have children, unless the building is designated a seniors building for tenants 65 years and older. The landlord should not refuse to rent to you because the unit is "too small" unless, by renting to you, the landlord would break local occupancy standards.

Landlord References and Credit Checks

A landlord should not refuse to rent to you because you have no previous landlord references or credit history. Having no credit history is different than having a bad credit history.

Pregnancy

Landlords cannot refuse to rent to you because you are pregnant or evict you because you become pregnant while living in the apartment. Pregnancy is protected under the ground of "sex" in the Code.

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**

This Fact Sheet has been produced as part of the *Facilitating Local Responses to Housing Discrimination* project. Special thank you to our funder, the Ontario Trillium Foundation, an agency of the Government of Ontario.