

FACT SHEET: Housing Discrimination faced by Newcomers

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 your landlord's family member.

WHAT ARE YOUR RIGHTS?

Harassment

It is illegal for a landlord, agent of the landlord or another occupant of the same building to harass you on the basis of any of the prohibited grounds including race, ancestry, place of origin, ethnic origin or citizenship. If another tenant is harassing you, you should inform your landlord in writing and your landlord should do something to stop it.

Guarantors & Pre-paying Rent

A landlord should not require you to obtain guarantors or pre-pay rent in order to rent a unit just because you are a newcomer to Canada.

Landlord References and Credit Checks

Newcomers often may not have previous landlord references or a credit history. 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.

Family Status

Landlords cannot 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 cannot refuse to rent to you because the unit is "too small" unless, by renting to you, the landlord would break local occupancy standards.

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. Now you have 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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