

# FACT SHEET: Discrimination in Housing

## 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?

### 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.

### Marital Status

You should not be refused an apartment because you are single, divorced or separated.

### 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. Landlords cannot apply income ratios to tenants.

### 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.

### 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.

### 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.

# 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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