

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS:

Human Rights in Housing

This document provides information about Ontario housing law and renters' rights. This information does not constitute legal advice. For legal advice, please contact a lawyer or your local community legal clinic.

Under the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, tenants have legal protections based on their:

- Citizenship, race, place of origin, ethnic origin, colour, and ancestry
- Sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and pregnancy
- Disability
- Age
- Creed/religion
- Family status and marital status
- Receipt of public assistance

Human Rights Code protections do not apply in certain housing situations. For example, they do not apply when a landlord and tenant share a kitchen or bathroom.

The *Human Rights Code's* protections mean that landlords must:

- Not discriminate against tenants based on *Human Rights Code* grounds.
- Accommodate tenants' needs related to *Human Rights Code* grounds.
- Not harass tenants, or allow tenants to be harassed, based on *Human Rights Code* grounds.

DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination happens when a landlord treats a tenant differently because of a *Human Rights Code* ground. Discrimination also happens when a landlord applies the same rule to everyone, but that rule has a negative effect on a tenant because of a *Human Rights Code* ground. Discrimination can be intentional, or unintentional. For example, it is discriminatory for landlords to say either of the following:

“You cannot rent a unit in my building because you use a wheelchair.”

OR

“Everyone must enter the building at the front, where the stairs are.”

ACCESSIBILITY

When a tenant needs extra support relating to a *Human Rights Code* ground, they may tell the landlord. The landlord then has a duty to make every reasonable effort to accommodate that need. For example:

- If a tenant has a disability and needs a ramp, the tenant should let the landlord know that in writing, and should provide supporting documents like a doctor's note.
- The landlord has a duty to accommodate the request unless the accommodation would be extremely expensive for them or would cause a serious health or safety concern.

HARASSMENT

Harassment happens when the landlord's interactions with the tenant are unwelcome in a way that connects to a *Human Rights Code* ground. A landlord breaks the law if:

- They harass the tenant intentionally.
- They do not intend to harass the tenant, but their actions have that effect.
- They do not take steps to stop one tenant from harassing another tenant.

Tenants can bring complaints about discrimination, accommodation or harassment to the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario or the Landlord and Tenant Board. Learn more about renters' human rights:

[Canadian Centre for Housing Rights](#)



[Human Rights Legal Support Centre](#)



[Ontario Human Rights Commission](#)



[Landlord and Tenant Board](#)

