

# Harassment and discrimination

## Harassment against tenants

The law says that your landlord or anyone who is working for them is not allowed to harass you, threaten you, or invade your privacy. And if you're being harassed by another tenant, your landlord must take reasonable steps to fix the problem.

Examples of harassment include:

- yelling at you or insulting you
- taking photographs of you or your home without your permission
- giving your personal information to someone without your permission
- making sexual suggestions or advances knowing that you do not want them
- trying to stop you from organizing or being active in a tenants' association, or doing other things to stand up for your rights
- saying or doing things that discriminate against you, for example, because of your colour, religion, sexual orientation, ethnic background, disability, or because you have children

Even if you owe rent, your landlord is not allowed to:

- knock on your door or phone you at unreasonable times
- enter your home when they don't have the right to go in
- cut off important services, such as heat or electricity
- take your things
- lock you out or change your lock without giving you a key

It is also harassment if your landlord or someone who works for your landlord threatens to do any of the things listed above, or threatens to harm you.

## What can I do about harassment?

- Tell your landlord there is a problem and that you want it to stop. Keep notes about the harassment. If the harassment continues, send a letter or email to the landlord. Keep a copy.
- Ask other tenants if they are also being harassed. You might be better able to solve these problems if tenants work together.
- Complain to the Rental Housing Enforcement Unit (RHEU). Call **1-888-772-9277** or go to their website at <https://www.ontario.ca/page/solve-disagreement-your-landlord-or-tenant>.
- Call the police. If the situation is urgent or you feel unsafe, call **911**.
- Apply to the Landlord and Tenant Board. You should do this within one year of when the harassment happened. It is best to get legal advice. You can speak to a lawyer at a community legal clinic by calling Legal Aid Ontario at **1-800-668-8258** or [www.legalaid.on.ca](http://www.legalaid.on.ca).

## Discrimination against tenants

If your landlord or someone working for your landlord discriminates against you, they might be breaking a law called the Human Rights Code.

Discrimination in housing means you are treated unfairly because:

- of your race or colour, your birthplace, citizenship or ethnic background, your religion, age, sex, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression,
- you are pregnant or have children, or
- you receive social assistance or welfare.

Examples of discrimination include:

- treating you badly because of your colour or religion
- refusing to put in a ramp or make other changes for you if you use a wheelchair
- having strict rules about noise that are harder for you to follow if you have children
- not trying to stop other tenants from discriminating against you

It is also discrimination when landlords refuse to rent to people who have no credit rating. This can be a problem for young people and for people who are new to Canada.

## Can landlords rent to women only or men only?

Yes. The law says that a landlord can rent all units in a building to tenants of one biological sex.

## Can a landlord refuse to rent me a place where I would share a kitchen or bathroom with them?

The law says that a landlord can refuse to rent a place to anyone for **any** reason if the landlord or the landlord's family is going to share a kitchen or bathroom with the tenant. And if they **do** rent to you, the law doesn't stop them from discriminating against you in other ways.

### What can I do about discrimination?

- Keep notes, such as dates, documents, photos, and names of witnesses, because discrimination can be hard to prove.
- Talk to other tenants to find out if they are also being discriminated against, so you can work together.
- Get information from the Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation (CERA) at **1-800-263-1139 ext. 1** or [www.equalityrights.org/cera](http://www.equalityrights.org/cera).
- Get legal advice from the Human Rights Legal Support Centre at **1-866-625-5179** or visit [www.hrlsc.on.ca](http://www.hrlsc.on.ca).
- You can speak to a lawyer at a community legal clinic by calling Legal Aid Ontario at **1-800-668-8258** or [www.legalaid.on.ca](http://www.legalaid.on.ca).



Visit [www.stepstojustice.ca](http://www.stepstojustice.ca) for more information about housing law. This is general information for people in Ontario, Canada. It is not intended to be used as legal advice.

Vous pourriez avoir droit à des services en français devant les tribunaux ou auprès d'organismes gouvernementaux. Visitez [www.justicepasapas.ca/droits-linguistiques-des-francophones](http://www.justicepasapas.ca/droits-linguistiques-des-francophones).