



## Discrimination and Harassment at Work

### What types of discrimination and harassment are illegal?

No one can treat you differently, refuse to hire you, pay you less, give you different work rules or conditions, harass you, demote or fire you at your job because of your

- Race
- Sex
- Color
- Creed
- Religion
- Pregnancy
- Familial status
- Membership on a local human rights commission
- National Origin (but they can ask for proof that you are allowed to work in the U.S.)
- Marital status
- Getting public assistance
- Disability
- Age
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity
- Genetic information

You can't be fired, harassed or treated differently at your job because of a bankruptcy either. Bankruptcy may be part of the reason you are NOT HIRED, but it cannot be the only reason.

### What are common examples of discrimination and harassment?

- Promotions are only offered to white employees, even though employees of other races have the same training, experience, and work performance.
- At work, your co-workers call you bad racial names. Your supervisor knows about it but does nothing.
- You ask your employer if you can use an empty office for prayer during your breaks and they tell you no, but they let another employee use it for breaks. That could be religious discrimination.
- Your supervisor asks you for a date or says personal or sexual things to you. You don't want a personal relationship and don't like the comments. The supervisor tells you that if you don't cooperate you won't get a raise.
- Your employer won't promote married women because they think the women will get pregnant and leave. Or won't promote parents of young children because they think it will get in the way of work duties.
- Your manager yells at you, and treats you badly because you don't speak English very well.
- Your employer demotes you when you are 56, after working at the job for 20 years because you are "too old to learn new things."



## What should I do if I am being discriminated against or harassed?

If you are being discriminated against or harassed at work because of your race, sex, religion etc., you need to report it to the supervisor, Human Resources, or another supervisor you feel comfortable talking to as soon as possible. If you can, do this in writing. Keep a copy.

## What can I do about discrimination and harassment?

- Write down things that happen to you that do not feel right.
- Write down the date and time, and the names of anyone else that was there.
- Take notes of comments made by, and conversations with, your supervisor.
- Report your worries about discrimination and harassment to your supervisor in writing.

## Can I get in trouble if I complain?

No. Employers can't get back at you (retaliate) if you have made a good faith claim that you are a victim of illegal discrimination or harassment. If you are fired after reporting discrimination you may be able to sue.

**Sometimes it is hard to say what is discrimination or harassment, and what is not. If you feel you may have been discriminated against or harassed, call one of the agencies below.**

A legal claim for discrimination or harassment has to be filed within a certain period of time after it happened. Time periods depend on your case and the agency you file with. **But the time periods are short.** Call immediately or you may lose your chance to protect your rights.

For more information or to get help with your claim call these agencies:

### Minnesota Department of Human Rights

Freeman Building  
625 Robert St. North  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Phone: (651) 539-1100 or 1-(800) 657-3704  
TTY: (651) 296-1283  
<http://mn.gov/mdhr/>

### Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

330 South 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave., Suite 720  
Minneapolis, MN 55401

Phone: (612) 335-4040  
TTY: (612) 335-4045  
[www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov)

### Minneapolis Department of Civil Rights

City Hall, Room 239  
350 South 5<sup>th</sup> St  
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Phone: (612) 673-3012  
TTY: (612) 673-2044

<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/civilrights/complaint/index.htm>



**Fact Sheets are legal information NOT legal advice. See a lawyer for advice.**

*Don't use this fact sheet if it is more than 1 year old. Ask us for updates, a fact sheet list, or alternate formats.*

© 2019 Minnesota Legal Services Coalition. This document may be reproduced and used for non-commercial personal and educational purposes only. All other rights reserved. This notice must remain on all copies. Reproduction, distribution, and use for commercial purposes are strictly prohibited.