



# Sexual Harassment in Housing

## What is sexual harassment in housing?

Sexual harassment in housing is when a housing provider or their employee makes unwelcome sexual advances, demands sex or sexual favors, often uses other words or acts of a sexual nature, rapes or sexually assaults you.

## IT IS ILLEGAL

## What kinds of housing does the law apply to?

The law can apply to all kinds of housing. This includes privately owned houses, apartment buildings, condo associations, public housing and homeless shelters.



## What are some examples of sexual harassment in housing?

When the harasser

- asks you out on a date
- asks you to trade sex or sexual favors for rent
- threatens to evict you because you refuse to have sex with him/her
- will not make repairs because you won't have sex or because you tell him/her to stop
- makes sexual comments to you that make you feel threatened or uncomfortable
- touches you in an unwanted sexual way
- rapes or sexually assaults you

It does not matter if you participate or refuse. Even if you have gone along with demands for sex in the past, **you have the right to stop it now.**

## What can I do?

The most important thing is safety -Call for help! **If you are assaulted, call 911.**

- If you are not comfortable reporting to the police but want to talk to someone, call the Sexual Violence Center Crisis Line at (612) 871-5111.

- You can file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Minnesota Department of Human Rights or a city agency. Call them for information on what to do. They will investigate your claim for free. In most cases, you need to file a complaint or lawsuit within 1 or sometimes 2 years.

**MN 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

**MN Department of Human Rights – St Cloud**

City Hall  
400 Second St South  
St. Cloud, MN 56301

Phone: (320) 650-3133

[www.humanrights.minnesota.state.us](http://www.humanrights.minnesota.state.us)

**Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**

77 West Jackson Boulevard  
Chicago, IL 60604-3507  
Phone: (800) 765-9372

[www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov)



- Call a lawyer to talk about your options. A lawyer can:
  - Get a court order to keep the harasser away from you
  - Fight eviction that your landlord filed because of your response to sexual harassment
  - Start a civil rights case and ask the court to make the landlord pay money damages to you.

**Know Your Rights**

- It is illegal for a landlord or housing employees to make you have sex with him/her by threatening to evict you if you don't.
- It is illegal for a landlord to make unwanted sexual comments to you that make you feel intimidated.
- If you are being sexually harassed by your housing provider, tell him/her to stop.
- Write down what happened to you while it is still fresh in your memory. It is important to have written records.
- It is illegal for a landlord to evict you because you called the police for help.

**You have the right to be free from sexual harassment.**

**To Learn More, Contact:**

**Housing Discrimination Law Project**

Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid  
111 North Fifth Street, Suite 100  
Minneapolis, MN 55403  
(612) 334-5970

**Housing Equality Law Project**

Southern MN Regional Legal Services  
55 5<sup>th</sup> Street East  
1000 Alliance Bank Center  
St. Paul, MN 55101  
(651) 222-4731



Go to [www.LawHelpMN.org](http://www.LawHelpMN.org) for more information about fair housing rights and resources.

***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.*

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