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 *(including natural hairstyles)*
- Sex
- Color
- Creed
- Religion
- Pregnancy
- Familial status *(having kids or being pregnant)*
- Marital status *(single, married, divorced, separated, or widowed)*
- Getting public assistance
- Disability
- Age
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity
- Genetic information
- 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.)

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 can't 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 gets 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 as soon as possible. Report it to the supervisor, Human Resources, or another supervisor you feel comfortable talking to. If you can, make your report in writing. Keep a copy.



What can I do about discrimination and harassment?

- Write down things that happen to you that don't 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.

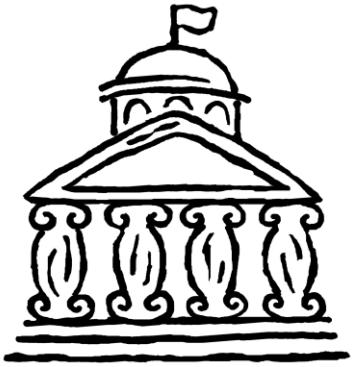
A legal claim for discrimination or harassment has to be filed within a certain period of time after it happened. Time periods depend on your case and the agency you file with. **But the time periods are short.** Call right away or you may lose your chance to protect your rights.

For more information or to get help with your claim:

Minnesota Department of Human Rights
Grigg's Midway Building
540 Fairview Ave North, #201
St. Paul, MN 55104

Phone: (651) 539-1100 or 1-(800) 657-3704
MN Relay 711 or 1-(800) 657-3775
http://mn.gov/mdhr/

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
330 South 2nd Ave., Suite 720
Minneapolis, MN 55401



Phone: (612) 552-7306
TTY: 1-(800) 669-6820
www.eeoc.gov

Minneapolis Department of Civil Rights
City Hall, Room 239
350 South 5th St
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Phone: (612) 673-3012
TTY: (612) 263-6850
www2.minneapolismn.gov/government/departments/civil-rights

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