

Housing Discrimination is against the Law in South Carolina



The South Carolina Fair Housing Law makes it illegal to discriminate in housing because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, physical or mental handicaps, or familial status (families with children). The law applies to the sale, rental and financing of residential housing. Apartments, houses, mobile homes; and, even vacant lots to be used for housing, are covered by the Fair Housing Law. With a few exceptions, anyone who has control over residential property and real estate financing must obey the law. This includes rental managers, property owners, real estate agents, landlords, banks, developers, builders, insurers, appraisers, and individual homeowners who are selling or renting their property.

Examples of Housing Discrimination:

The law prohibits the following acts based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, handicap or familial status:

- Refusing to sell or rent housing
- Lying about the availability of housing
- Evicting someone from housing.
- Discrimination in the terms or conditions of housing; such as, rent, security deposits, sale prices, the use of facilities or financing.

Case Examples of Discrimination:

- A real estate agent tries to persuade someone not to buy or rent a house in a certain neighborhood. This is called steering.
- A landlord refuses to rent an apartment to a man because he is mentally retarded.
- A newspaper ad says that housing is available for "white" applicants.
- A black person answers a newspaper ad for an apartment. The landlord tells him that apartment has already been rented. It turns out that the apartment was not rented, and the landlord later rents it to a white applicant who answers the same ad.
- A landlord evicts a white tenant from her mobile home because her black friends visit her there.

- A resident manager refuses to rent an apartment to a family with children, will only allow families with children to live in certain buildings or on certain floors or charges families higher security deposits.
- A landlord checks the credit records of all black and Hispanic applicants and uses small credit problems as an excuse to refuse to rent apartments to them. It turns out that the landlord does not always check white applicants' credit records or overlooks small credit problems in their records.
- A property manager refuses to rent an apartment to a single woman, but he will rent the apartment to a single man.
- A bank refuses to lend money to a house buyer because the house he wants to buy is in a minority neighborhood. This is called redlining.
- A rental manager charges minority tenants a larger security deposit, or higher rent, than white tenants.
- A female tenant and her family are evicted from their apartment because the woman refused the landlord's sexual advances.
- A landlord refuses to rent an apartment to a blind woman because she has a seeing-eye dog.

Are You Being Discriminated Against?

The South Carolina Human Affairs Commission is a state government agency that enforces the South Carolina Fair Housing Law. If you think you have been discriminated against in housing, you should contact the Commission. The Commission will investigate your complaint to see if the law was broken. If there is a violation, the Commission can help get legal remedies to which you may be entitled. Most of the time, the Commission can settle housing discrimination complaints quickly and easily. If it is necessary, the Commission may take discrimination cases to a hearing or to court.

Discrimination can be very subtle. Often people may suspect they have been discriminated against, but they are not sure they can prove it. If this happens to you, call the Commission anyway. Our investigators can often uncover discrimination the average person cannot detect. If you do not contact the Commission, you may never know if there was something that could have been done about it.

Sometimes people worry about what might happen if, after an investigation, it turns out there is no proof of discrimination. The answer is nothing! If you believe that you are being discriminated against, you have the right to file a complaint. No one can take any action against you for doing so, even if it turns out there was no discrimination.

We are here to help.

If you feel you have been discriminated against,
we want to hear from you.

HOW TO CONTACT THE COMMISSION

You may call:

(803) 737-7800

Toll Free: 1-800-521-0725, (in state)

TDD: (803) 253-4125

Fax: (803) 253-4191

**Monday through Friday
from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

Web Address:

www.state.sc.us/schac

E-mail Address:

Information@schac.state.sc.us

Our Address is:

South Carolina Human Affairs Commission
Fair Housing Unit
2611 Forest Drive, Suite 200
Post Office Box 4490
Columbia, SC 29204-4490



**Visitors are received by appointment
or as a walk-in.**

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The South Carolina Human Affairs Commission

**Ralph Haile
Interim
Commissioner**