

SIGNS OF POSSIBLE DISCRIMINATION:

- The housing provider refuses to sell, rent or show available housing after learning that you are a member of a protected class.
- Statements are made that the dwelling would not be suitable for you, or that the neighbors do not want you there.
- The availability changes between a phone contact and an in-person visit.

When Looking for Housing, Save the Following Information:

- Date and time of all contacts
- Name of the person and/or company with whom you spoke
- Address of the property, including unit number
- Information about all units offered to you
- Details about any statements made to you related to your protected status (i.e., questions about the ages of your children or source of income)

REMEMBER: Save all emails and text messages sent to or received from a housing provider!

Fair Housing is Your Right!

For more information or to file a housing discrimination complaint contact:



257 Union Street
New Bedford, MA 02740

<http://www.southcoastfairhousing.org>

(774) 473-8333

To contact us via TTY,
call MassRelay using your TTY
at 711 or 800-439-2370
(or 866-930-9252 for Spanish)
and provide our phone number.

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SouthCoast Fair Housing, Inc. is solely responsible for the accuracy of the statements and interpretations contained in this publication.

**FAIR HOUSING
FOR ALL**



(774) 473-8333



HOUSING DISCRIMINATION IS ILLEGAL

The federal Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing-related transactions because of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability or familial status. The Massachusetts Fair Housing statute also prohibits housing discrimination on the basis of age, veteran or military status, sexual orientation, marital status, receipt of public assistance or housing subsidy, genetic identity, and gender identity.

Fair housing laws apply to a wide variety of housing transactions, including rentals, sales, home mortgages, appraisals and homeowners insurance. Landlords, real estate agents, lenders, insurance companies, and condominium, cooperative and homeowner's associations must not discriminate because of one's membership in a protected class.



COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What actions does the law prohibit?

The law prohibits actions such as denying housing, limiting access to housing, discouraging homeseekers, making or publishing discriminatory statements, or creating different rules, fees or standards because of one's membership in a protected class.

Is there any type of housing that is exempt from fair housing laws?

Communities that qualify for the "Housing for Older Persons" exception under the Fair Housing Act are permitted to exclude families with children under the age of 18. These communities must meet all the requirements of the exemption: In housing for persons 62 or older, every resident must be at least 62 or older; and in housing for persons age 55 or older, 80% of the units must have at least one person age 55 or older, and the community must meet other requirements, including completing surveys.

In some circumstances, the Fair Housing Act exempts owner-occupied buildings with no more than four units and the Massachusetts Fair Housing statute exempts owner-occupied buildings with no more than two units.

What is familial status?

"Familial status" means the presence of children under 18 in the household. This includes pregnant women and persons in the process of adopting or securing custody of a child/children. Children include foster children and grandchildren as long as the person has legal custody or written permission.

What is a reasonable accommodation?

Housing providers must permit reasonable accommodations requested by residents. A "reasonable accommodation" is a change, exception or adjustment to a rule, policy, practice or service that may be necessary for a person with a disability to have an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling. For example, reasonable accommodations include allowing an assistance animal even if there is a "no pets" policy. Another common example is creating a reserved accessible parking space for a specific resident. A request for a reasonable accommodation may be denied if providing the accommodation would impose an undue financial and administrative burden on the housing provider or would fundamentally alter the nature of the provider's operations, determined on a case-by-case basis. When a housing provider refuses a requested accommodation because it is not reasonable, the provider should discuss with the requester whether there is an alternative accommodation that would effectively address the requester's disability-related needs.

SouthCoast Fair Housing, Inc. (SCFH) is a private, non-profit organization established in 2012 to eradicate housing discrimination throughout southeastern Massachusetts. Through education, investigation, and enforcement activities, SCFH works to ensure that all individuals have equal housing opportunities.

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