



OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL MAURA HEALEY COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS: A BRIEF GUIDE TO HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT LAWS

This publication outlines many of your rights under the Massachusetts Anti-Discrimination Law, M.G.L. c. 151B, as well as under additional state and federal housing and employment laws.

Housing Discrimination

FAIR HOUSING LAWS: Massachusetts and federal laws prohibit discrimination by realtors, landlords, mortgage lenders, brokers, and property managers. These individuals may not treat you differently in the sale, rental, or advertising of housing because of your membership in a protected class. For example, a realtor may not refuse to show you an apartment because you have a Section 8 voucher.

LEAD PAINT: Landlords must abate lead paint hazards in any unit where a child under age six lives. Landlords may not refuse to rent to someone with a young child in order to avoid their obligation to delead. For example, an advertisement for an available apartment cannot state “no children” or discourage applicants with children from applying.

Are You In A Protected Class?
Fair housing laws apply to discrimination based on: race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, ancestry, genetic information, marital status, veteran or active military status, age, familial status (i.e., children), and source of income (i.e., Section 8 voucher).

Employment Discrimination

Introduction to Disability Rights
A disability is a physical, mental, or emotional impairment that substantially limits a major life activity. Employers are required to engage in an interactive dialogue with individuals with disabilities to identify “reasonable accommodations,” or changes or exceptions to policies or practices that will assist employees in performing the essential functions of their jobs. Housing providers are also required to provide reasonable accommodations or modifications for tenants with disabilities.

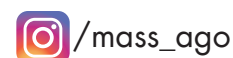
EMPLOYMENT LAWS: Massachusetts and federal laws prohibit employers from discriminating against employees or applicants because of their membership in a protected class. For example, an employer may not refuse to hire someone because of her race, or demote an employee because of his age. The law also prohibits discriminating based on gender in the payment of wages.

ADDITIONAL PROTECTIONS: Employers must take steps to prevent harassment and may not retaliate against employees who complain about or report discrimination. Additionally, employers must provide parental leave and family/medical leave as required by state and federal law.

How to Report Discrimination

Contact the **Civil Rights Division of the Attorney General’s Office** at <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/file-a-consumer-complaint> or call us at (617) 963-2917 or (617) 963-2939 for disability rights complaints.

Contact the **Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD)** at <http://www.mass.gov/mcad> or by calling (617) 349-4396.



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