

Federal Law Prohibits Discrimination in Places of Public Accommodation

Title II of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act prohibit discrimination because of **race, color, religion, national origin, and disability** in certain places of public accommodation.

As the law states: “All persons shall be entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, and accommodations of any place of public accommodation.”

Additionally, state and local laws may provide additional protections for individuals against discrimination based on **gender, age, or sexual orientation**.

Places of Public Accommodation

As defined under state, federal, and/or local laws, places of public accommodation include but are not limited to—

- businesses that provide lodging such as inns and hotels;
- facilities principally engaged in selling food for consumption such as restaurants, bars, or cafeterias;
- places of exhibition or entertainment such as a movie theater, concert hall, sports arena, or stadium;
- businesses that are physically located within the premises of any of the above mentioned establishments; or
- businesses which serve patrons of any of the above mentioned establishments;
- retail and grocery stores;
- doctor’s offices, dental offices, medical clinics, and hospitals;
- educational institutions, such as public schools and universities

State and Local Laws

In addition to Title II of the Civil Rights Act and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which prohibit discrimination in places of accommodation on the federal level, individual states and municipalities also have their own laws addressing public accommodation. The definition of a “public accommodation” and the protected characteristics may vary by state.

Report Violations

If you believe that you have been discriminated against in a place of public accommodation, report your complaint to company management. If your complaint is not resolved, you can also file a complaint with the Department of Justice.

Correspondence to the Department may be sent to:

U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530-0001

The Department may be contacted by phone at the following:

- Department Comment Line: 202-353-1555
- Department of Justice Main Switchboard: 202-514-2000
- TTY/ASCII/TDD: 800-877-8339 (or Federal IP Relay Service (link is external))

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