

and other services, must make sure that racial harassment does not happen on their property, in their workplace, or in their facilities. They cannot ignore complaints of harassment and should take steps to make sure their environments are safe and comfortable for everyone.

Racial harassment can lead to violence

Silence will not usually make racial harassment go away, and many times if nothing is done, it gets more serious. If you feel uncomfortable or threatened, speak to a person in authority about it (a supervisor, the owner of the store, etc.).

If harassing behaviour makes you feel in danger or leads to violence, call the police immediately.

Reprisal is against the law

The *Code* also protects you from reprisal (or punishment). This means that you have a right to raise issues or complain about racial discrimination or harassment without facing discipline (or the threat of it) or

other negative treatment. This protection applies if you speak out about harassment or discrimination in your workplace, in housing or in services and when making a formal complaint such as by filing an application with the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario.

For more information

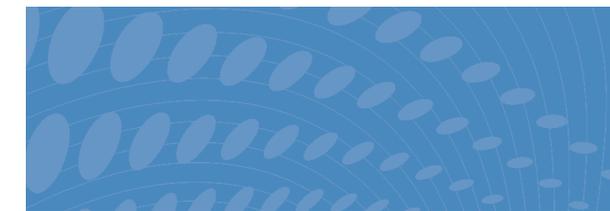
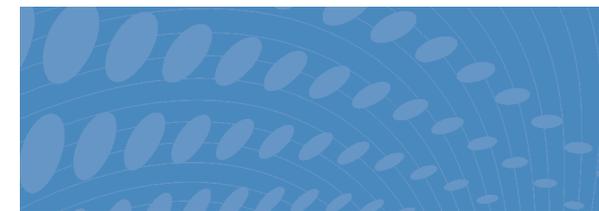
The Ontario Human Rights Commission's *Policy and Guidelines on Racism and Racial Discrimination* and other publications are available at www.ohrc.on.ca.

To file a complaint – called an application – contact the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario at:

Toll Free: 1-866-598-0322
TTY Toll Free: 1-866-607-1240
Website: www.hrto.ca

If you need legal help, contact the Human Rights Legal Support Centre at:

Toll Free: 1-866-625-5179
TTY Toll Free: 1-866-612-8627
Website: www.hrlsc.on.ca



Racial harassment:

know your rights

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What is racial harassment?

Racial harassment means that someone is bothering you, threatening you or treating you unfairly because of your perceived:

- ◆ race
- ◆ colour
- ◆ ancestry
- ◆ place of origin
- ◆ ethnic origin
- ◆ creed
- ◆ citizenship.

Racial harassment may be based on a combination of any of the above characteristics. It may also be because of things related to them, such as if you wear clothing related to your background, speak with an accent or practice a certain religion.

It is against the law for anyone to harass you, insult you, or treat you unfairly for any of these reasons.

The Ontario *Human Rights Code* (the *Code*) protects you from racial harassment or discrimination. Your rights are protected where you work, live, or get a service.

These services include places such as restaurants, stores and malls, hotels, hospitals, recreation facilities and schools. The *Code* also protects you from discrimination and harassment when you sign a contract or are a member of a union, trade or vocational association.

Racial harassment can happen when someone where you work, live or get a service:

- ◆ makes racial slurs or “jokes”
- ◆ makes fun of you or insults you because of your racial identity
- ◆ posts cartoons or pictures, in a workplace, school or housing space, that degrade persons of a particular racial group
- ◆ calls you names because of your race, colour, citizenship, place of origin, ancestry, ethnic background or creed.

Sometimes racial harassment doesn't even involve words or actions directly related to your race. It may just be that someone is unfairly singling you out for humiliating treatment because of your background.

A poisoned environment

Racial harassment can have a bad effect on, or “poison,” the places where you live, work or receive services. Even if the harassment is not directed at you, it can still poison the environment for you and others. It can make living and working together very hard.

How do you know if the environment is poisoned? One way is to look at the effect of negative comments or actions. For instance, if certain racial slurs, actions or “jokes” make you or others feel uncomfortable in the workplace or afraid to go to work, this could show that the work environment is poisoned.

What can I do?

The person who is harassing you could be:

- ◆ your manager or co-worker
- ◆ a janitor, building manager or building owner
- ◆ your teacher
- ◆ a person living in your building.

If you think you have been harassed, you can try to tell that person to stop. You might feel that saying or doing something might put you, your job or your housing at risk. If this is the case, go to someone else in authority.

If it happens at work, you can speak to human resources, tell a manager or contact your union representative. If it happens in your building, you can notify your landlord.

If none of these options improve your situation, or you are afraid of taking these steps, you can also file a formal human rights complaint – called an application – with the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario.

Am I responsible for making it stop?

You may need to take steps to make sure that someone in a position of authority knows you are being harassed – but you are not the one responsible for making it stop.

In Ontario, employers, contractors, professional associations, unions and people who provide rental housing accommodation