

What are human rights?

Human rights are rights we have simply for existing as humans.

We have human rights at work. Human rights laws prohibit discrimination at work based on **protected grounds**.

SOURCES OF HUMAN RIGHTS LAWS

International Law	<i>Universal Declaration of Human Rights</i> Thirty fundamental rights for all citizens in the world, including rights at work.
Canadian Law	<i>Canadian Human Rights Act</i> Applies to all federally regulated workplaces, including the following industries: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• federal government• railways and shipping• telephone and cable systems• radio and TV broadcasting• transporting (including road and air)• banking• First Nations administrations
Alberta Law	<i>Alberta Human Rights Act</i> Applies to most workplaces in Alberta (except where the <i>Canadian Human Rights Act</i> applies)

Discrimination exists when:

1. You have a protected characteristic (based on a protected ground).
2. You experience a **negative effect**.
3. The protected characteristic was a factor in the negative effect.

Protected Grounds

- race
- religious beliefs
- colour
- gender or sex
- gender identity
- gender expression
- physical disability
- mental disability
- age
- ancestry
- place of origin
- marital status
- source of income
- family status
- sexual orientation
- genetic characteristics*
- conviction for an offence for which a pardon was granted or record suspension ordered*

**Canadian Human Rights Act* only

Negative Effects

- not getting a job
- negative changes to terms and conditions of employment
- reduced pay
- not being promoted
- unsafe work conditions
- denial of benefits
- denial of leave or accommodation
- quitting because of discrimination
- termination for making a complaint

EXAMPLE OF DISCRIMINATION

You are pregnant. You can no longer lift heavy boxes. Your boss refuses to modify your work and instead terminates your employment. Pregnancy falls under the protected characteristic of gender or sex. Not accommodating your condition and terminating your employment is a negative effect. The reason for the negative effect was the protected characteristic.

Under human rights laws, the term “**employee**” is not defined. Human rights tribunals and courts have found that human rights laws cover more than traditional employees. Independent contractors, subcontractors, taxi drivers, army cadets, volunteers and more have sometimes been employees under human rights laws.

Human rights apply when recruiting and hiring, as well as to terms and conditions, benefits, policies and termination of employment.

HELP IS AVAILABLE.

Workers’ Resource Centre

Helping workers in Alberta
www.helpwrc.org

Your Rights at Work

Reliable legal information
www.cplea.ca/rightsatwork/

Alberta Human Rights Commission

Resolving complaints of discrimination
www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca

SPOTLIGHT: Sexual Harassment at Work

Sexual harassment is a type of discrimination based on the protected grounds of gender, gender identity, gender expression or sexual orientation. It is any unwanted or unwelcome behaviour that is sexual in nature and negatively affects you. The person causing harm at work might be a coworker, boss, client, customer, contractor or student.

Sexual harassment includes:

- inappropriate looks or touches
- comments or teasing that are sexual in nature
- unwanted physical contact or closeness
- unwanted sexual requests or demands
- jokes about gender or sexual orientation
- talk about sexual activities
- suggestive photos or drawings

In a 2020 report:

*25% of women and 17% of men said they experienced sexual misconduct in their workplace in 2019-2020.**

Sexual harassment is not okay.

* Source: Workers’ experiences of inappropriate sexualized behaviours, sexual assault and gender-based discrimination in the Canadian provinces, 2020 (Statistics Canada): bit.ly/3zg7gMF

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