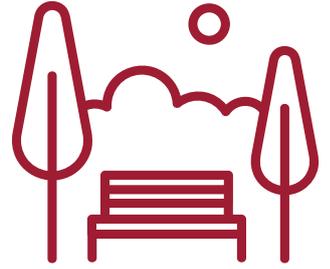


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Public Accommodations

What is Discrimination in Public Accommodations?

The owner, operator, or employee of certain public places cannot treat people unfairly because of their personal characteristics, like race, gender identity, or disability. This means they cannot refuse entry and must provide equal access to the services or benefits the public place provides.



What are the Protected Categories?

- Race
- Sex
- Disability
- Gender Identity
- Color
- Familial Status
- Sexual Orientation
- Creed
- Religion
- National Origin
- Marital Status
- Age

Examples of Settings Where this Law Applies:

- Restaurants
- Hotels
- Theaters
- Bus and Transportation
- Government Facilities
- Recreation Centers
- Hospitals and Medical Institutions
- Retail Establishments
- Office Buildings and Commercial Establishments
- Sidewalks, Parking Lots, and other Public Surfaces
- Museums, Amusement Parks, and other Public Attractions

There are more settings where this law applies. Notably, there are a few exceptions which includes:



Private Clubs and Organizations, such as Fraternal Organizations

Religious Institutions

What does Discrimination Look Like?

- ! You are refused a service or entrance into a facility, including a public restroom, because of your protected category
- ! You are unable to access the entrance or exit of a facility due to your disability
- ! Due to your membership in one or more protected categories, you are subjected to different terms or conditions for services or facilities.
- ! The owner or operator of the public accommodation has failed to provide customers with adequate accessible parking spaces.

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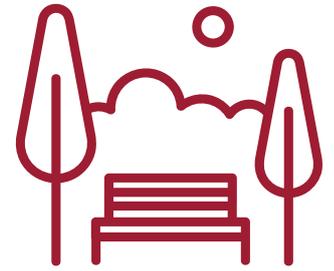
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KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Public Accommodations

What is Discrimination Based on Disability in Public Accommodations?

In Maryland, it is illegal to discriminate against a person with a disability in public accommodations. This includes refusing service, denying access, or failing to provide equal treatment because of a disability, a history of disability, or a belief that someone has a disability. Public accommodations are places open to the public, like stores, restaurants, theaters, hotels, medical offices, and recreational facilities.



Who Must Comply with the Law?

Businesses and nonprofit organizations that serve the public—like retail stores, restaurants, museums, transportation providers, and health care facilities—must follow disability rights laws. They must ensure their spaces and services are accessible and must make reasonable changes to ensure people with disabilities have appropriate access. This includes removing physical barriers when possible and allowing auxiliary aids like interpreters or assistive technology.

Effective Communication

People with vision, hearing, or speech disabilities have the right to receive information in ways they understand. This is called effective communication.



Covered entities, like businesses, schools, or government offices, may need to provide things like:

- Sign language interpreters
- Large print or Braille materials
- Written or typed communication instead of spoken instructions
- Captioning for videos or public presentations

This support must be provided unless it would cause an undue burden by being too difficult or expensive.

What does Discrimination Look Like?

-  Refusing entrance to a service animal in a store or restaurant
-  Refusing to serve someone because they use a wheelchair
-  Designing a space that cannot be accessed with mobility devices
-  Denying someone entry because of how they communicate or move

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