



Fair Housing: The Law

Virginia's Fair Housing Law makes it illegal to discriminate in residential housing on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, elderliness, familial status, and handicap. In addition to prohibiting overt discrimination, Virginia's Fair Housing Law makes it illegal to have different standards, terms or conditions for different classes of people. Blacks must be treated the same as whites, the disabled the same as the non-disabled, females the same as males.

Virginia's Fair Housing Law applies to rental transactions (trying to rent an apartment), to sales transactions (trying to buy a home), financing transactions (trying to obtain a mortgage), and to insurance transactions (trying to obtain homeowner's insurance). The law applies to real estate agents, insurance agents, bankers, mortgage brokers, architects, builders, landlords, property owners, managers, and advertisers.

Answers to Common Questions about Virginia's Fair Housing

What are some practices that Virginia's Fair Housing Law prohibits?

1. Refusing to negotiate with someone in a rental, sales or financing transaction because of their race, color, religion, sex, national origin, elderliness, familial status, or disability.
2. Applying one set of rental, sales or financing terms to one group of people. For example: having one set of rental criteria for blacks and another set for whites.
3. Denying that a house or apartment has been rented when, in fact, it's still available.

4. Steering renters to a specific location within a complex or steering homebuyers to a specific location within a community. For example: telling a family with children that they can only live on the first floor.
5. Refusing to rent to someone because they have children. The only exception to this is where the complex has been certified as a housing for older persons facility. Obtaining such certification, however, requires meeting several standards.
6. Housing providers also cannot refuse to change their rules for a disabled tenant who needs a reasonable accommodation to use and enjoy their dwelling. For example, enforcing a no pet policy against a blind tenant who needs a seeing eye dog.

Need More Information or Assistance?

Any one in the City of Portsmouth with questions or in need of assistance should contact:

Mr. Daniel Best, Fair Housing Compliance Officer
757-391-2911

There is no fee for information or assistance. All calls are confidential.

