

# Sexual orientation

## INFORMATION SHEET

The *Alberta Human Rights Act* (the *Act*) prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation. This includes protection from differential treatment based on a person's actual or presumed sexual orientation or his or her association with a person who is gay, lesbian, heterosexual or bisexual.

- Gay or lesbian refers to persons who are sexually attracted to persons of their own sex.
- Heterosexual refers to persons who are attracted only to persons of the opposite sex.
- Bisexual refers to persons who are sexually attracted to persons of both sexes.

Under the *Act*, discrimination based on sexual orientation is prohibited in all of the following **areas**:

- statements, publications, notices, signs, symbols, emblems or other representations that are published, issued or displayed before the public
- goods, services, accommodation or facilities customarily available to the public
- tenancy (both residential and commercial)

- employment practices: Refusing to hire, promote or provide equal treatment to someone because of his or her sexual orientation is prohibited under the *Act*. Employees have the right to work in an environment free of harassment based on their sexual orientation.
- employment applications or advertisements
- membership in trade unions, employers' organizations or occupational associations

In addition to sexual orientation, the *Act* also prohibits discrimination on the **grounds** of race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, age (some restrictions apply), ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income and family status. Employers, landlords, business operators and providers of services are required to reasonably accommodate the needs of individuals based on any of these grounds.

The *Alberta Human Rights Act* has paramount status in Alberta. This means that where there is a conflict with other provincial legislation, the human rights legislation prevails unless it is "expressly declared by an Act of the Legislature that it operates notwithstanding" the *Alberta Human Rights Act*. 

# Contact us

The Alberta Human Rights Commission is an independent commission of the Government of Alberta. Our mandate is to foster equality and reduce discrimination. We provide public information and education programs, and help Albertans resolve human rights complaints.

**Hours of operation: 8:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
Monday to Friday (holidays excluded)**

**Northern Regional Office (Edmonton)**  
800 – 10405 Jasper Avenue NW  
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4R7  
780-427-7661 Confidential Inquiry Line  
780-427-6013 Fax

**Southern Regional Office (Calgary)**  
200 J.J. Bowlen Building  
620 – 7 Avenue SW  
Calgary, Alberta T2P 0Y8  
403-297-6571 Confidential Inquiry Line  
403-297-6567 Fax

To call toll-free within Alberta, dial 310-0000 and then enter the area code and phone number.

**TTY service for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing**  
1-800-232-7215 Toll-free within Alberta

**Email:** [humanrights@gov.ab.ca](mailto:humanrights@gov.ab.ca)  
**Website:** [albertahumanrights.ab.ca](http://albertahumanrights.ab.ca)

**Please note:** The Commission must receive your completed complaint form or letter within one year after the alleged contravention of the *Alberta Human Rights Act*. The one-year period starts the day after the date on which the alleged contravention of the Act occurred. For help calculating the one-year period, contact the Commission.

The Commission will make this publication available in accessible formats upon request for people with disabilities who do not read conventional print.