



5 Things You Should Know About Religious Discrimination

- 1 Religious discrimination or harassment is illegal in the workplace.** Employers generally cannot make employment decisions (like hiring, firing, promotions, pay, and benefits) based on religious beliefs, practices, or observances. This includes hostile comments, or slurs. Employers must also provide reasonable accommodations for an employee's or applicant's religious practice, unless doing so would create an undue hardship on their operations. For example, an employer must attempt to accommodate a Muslim employee's request for time to pray during work hours, or for an exemption from a dress code that prohibits headwear.
- 2 Religious discrimination or harassment is illegal when renting or buying a home.** Landlords and real estate professionals cannot refuse to lease to you, deny you access to financial services, charge you higher rent, offer you different amenities, or refuse to make generally required repairs because of your religious affiliation. Housing providers must also reasonably accommodate your religious beliefs unless doing so would be an undue burden on their operations. For example, a condominium association could not enforce a "no personal items in a hallway" rule to force a Jewish homeowner to take down a mezuzah or a Hindu homeowner to remove a Toran from their door.
- 3 Religious discrimination or harassment is illegal in places open to the public in your community.** A place of public accommodation (like restaurants, stores, non-parochial schools, police departments, other government agencies, doctors' offices, pharmacies, and other medical facilities) cannot discriminate against you because of your religion. For example, your local municipality cannot require permits for religious gatherings only when Sikhs organize them, but not require them when Christians do. Places open to the public must also reasonably accommodate your religious beliefs unless doing so would be an undue burden on their operations.
- 4 The New Jersey Law Against Discrimination's (LAD) protections are not limited to affiliation with traditionally known religions.** For example, if a student who practices Wicca or Witchcraft is refused an excusable absence in observance of the religious day of Samhain, but a Catholic student is allowed to observe Ash Wednesday as an excusable absence, this is religious discrimination in violation of the LAD. The school cannot refuse to accommodate the Wiccan student because they do not believe that Wicca is a religion. However, the LAD does not protect you based on political or social views.
- 5 The LAD protects you against retaliation.** No one can retaliate against you for reporting possible LAD violations, filing a discrimination complaint internally, with DCR, or in court, requesting a religious accommodation, or exercising any other rights under the LAD.

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