



YOU ARE PROTECTED AGAINST HOUSING-RELATED SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment is considered discrimination based on sex under fair housing laws and is illegal. You have the right to be free of sexual harassment in your home.

It is against the law for a housing provider to make sexual favors a condition of housing, to make sexual advances, or to engage in unwanted physical or verbal conduct that is sexual in nature.

Sexual harassment committed by a landlord, real estate agent, building manager, maintenance person, loan officer, insurance agent, housing provider, or any other person involved in real estate-related transactions is a violation of the Fair Housing Act.

Some examples of actions that are illegal include:

- A housing provider offers you special terms and conditions (such as lower rent or a bigger apartment) if you agree to have sex with them
- A housing provider threatens to evict you if you refuse to have sex or engage in sexual acts with them
- A maintenance person refuses to make repairs or puts you on the bottom of the list unless you grant them sexual favors
- A government employee threatens to take away a housing certificate or voucher unless you provide sexual favors
- A housing provider makes frequent sexual comments or stares in ways that make you uncomfortable
- A landlord frequently enters your apartment without permission while you are home
- Another tenant in the same complex sexually harasses you, and the landlord refuses to take action to stop the harassment



If the behavior makes you feel uncomfortable or threatened - and basically makes you wish you could live somewhere else - it may be a violation of federal and state fair housing laws. Women are the most frequent victims of this kind of sexual harassment, especially women who do not have very many housing choices.

But it *can* happen to anyone – no matter you or your harasser's gender, sex, or sexual preference.

HOME can help you end the harassment.

If your landlord or management company is making you afraid or uncomfortable to be there because of sexual words or actions, there is something you can do to stop it:

Call HOME at (804) 354-0641 or go to www.HOMEofVA.org to fill out an online complaint form. HOME will investigate your complaint and help you decide what to do next. There is no charge for any of HOME's services, and all calls are confidential.

Although you may be scared to file a complaint, it is important that you report sexual harassment as soon as possible to protect yourself and others who may be getting harassed. It is illegal for a housing provider to retaliate against you for filing a complaint, so you cannot be evicted or otherwise punished for speaking up.

Always call 911 if you are in immediate danger or a life-threatening situation. For more information about sexual violence and harassment, or emotional support, call the VA Family Violence & Sexual Assault Hotline at 1(800) 838-8238.

