What Is Covered/Exempted?

The fair housing laws cover most housing. In some circumstances, the laws exempt:

- Owner-occupied buildings with no more than four units.
- Single-family housing.
- Non-commercial housing operated by a religious group, provided it does not discriminate on a basis other than religion.
- Non-commercial housing operated by organizations and private clubs that limit occupancy solely to members.
- Housing for older people is exempt from the prohibition against familial status discrimination if it is determined that it is specifically designed for and occupied by older people or meets certain requirements.

Please Note:

- The prohibition against discriminatory advertising applies to single-family and owner-occupied housing that is otherwise exempt.
- Exemptions only apply if the property is not sold or rented with the sales or rental services of a real estate broker.
- Housing need not be made available to a person who is a direct threat to the health or safety of others, or who currently uses illegal drugs.

You must file your complaint with the Commission in writing within 365 days after the alleged discriminatory housing practice occurred or terminated.

To obtain more information, contact the Fairfax County Office of Human Rights and Equity Programs at 703-324-2953, TTY 703-324-2900 or www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hrc.

Human Rights Commission
Fairfax County, Virginia
12000 Government Center Pkwy
Suite 318
Fairfax, VA 22035-0093
Tel: 703-324-2953
TTY: 703-324-2900
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hrc

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Fairfax County is committed to nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in all county programs, services and activities. Reasonable ADA accommodations and alternative information formats will be provided upon request.

February 2009

FAIR HOUSING

Equal Access to Housing: It's Everyone's Right

Fairfax County Human Rights Commission
Office of Human Rights and Equity Programs
Human Rights Division

EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

Fair Housing Laws

Everyone has a right to fair housing. The right to live where one chooses with dignity and without fear of discrimination is a basic right guaranteed to all people.

The Fairfax County Human Rights Commission enforces the Fairfax County Human Rights Ordinance, which includes the Fairfax County Fair Housing Act.

The Fairfax County Ordinance prohibits discrimination in housing based on membership in the following protected classes:

- Race
- Color
- National origin (ethnicity, ancestry)
- Religion
- Sex (gender)
- Familial status (families with children under the age of 18)
- Disability (physical or mental)
- Elderliness (55 years or older)
- Marital status

What Is Prohibited?

In the sale and rental of housing:

No one may take any of the following actions based on a person's membership in a protected class:

- Refuse to rent or sell housing.
- Make housing unavailable.
- Deny a dwelling.
- Refuse to negotiate for housing.
- Set different terms, conditions, or privileges for sale or rental of a dwelling.
- Provide different housing services or facilities.
- Falsely deny that housing is available for inspection, sale or rental.
- For profit, persuade owners to sell or rent by making representations as to racial or ethnic ratios.
- Steer owners or renters to particular neighborhoods or housing within neighborhoods.
- Segregate tenants.
- Deny anyone access to or membership in a facility or service (such as a multiple listing service) related to the sale or rental of housing.
- Refuse to allow a resident to make reasonable modifications to a dwelling that are necessary for a disabled resident to use the housing.
- Refuse to make reasonable accommodations in rules, policies, practices or services, if such accommodations are necessary for a disabled resident to use the housing.
- Fail to make buildings accessible pursuant to federal, state and local law.
- Threaten, coerce, intimidate or interfere with anyone exercising a fair-housing right or assisting others who exercise that right.
- Use discriminatory advertising or make any discriminatory statement in connection with any real estate or real estate-related transaction.

In mortgage lending:

No one may take any of the following actions based on membership in a protected class:

- Refuse to make a mortgage loan.
- Refuse to provide information regarding loans.
- Impose different terms or conditions on a loan.
- Discriminate in appraising property.
- Refuse to purchase a loan.