

New York City Human Rights Law's Protections for Muslims & Those Perceived as Such

10 Things You Should Know

Thousands of Muslims with diverse backgrounds call New York City home. They, like New Yorkers of every faith, contribute to the unique and rich cultural diversity for which New York City is universally known. They deserve to live and work free from discrimination and harassment.

1.

The New York City Commission on Human Rights is the City agency charged with enforcing the New York City Human Rights Law, which prohibits discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations across 27 categories, including religion/creed. The Law also covers retaliation, discriminatory harassment, and bias-based profiling by law enforcement.

2.

It is illegal to discriminate against an employee based on religion/creed. Some examples of violations of the Law are verbally harassing or bullying an employee for being Muslim, refusing to hire or promote an employee because of their faith, assigning an employee to a non-customer facing role because of religious attire, or treating an employee differently because of their beliefs.

3.

Employees have the right to request reasonable accommodations to observe a religious practice or wear religious attire in the workplace. Examples include growing a longer beard or wearing turbans, hijabs, headscarves and kufis.*

4.

Employees also have the right to request time off to observe a religious holiday or ritual (such as prayer in the middle of the day) and can work with their employer to reach an arrangement, such as paid leave, leave without pay, or the ability to make up missed time at a later date.*

5.

It is illegal for housing providers to refuse to rent to an individual because of their religious belief or the perception of their religious belief based on their appearance.

6.

Landlords and building managers cannot refuse to allow tenants of one faith to show religious decorations, iconography, or symbols on the outside of their apartment doors if they allow tenants of another faith to do the same (for example, around major holidays such as Eid and Christmas).

7.

Landlords and superintendents cannot refuse to fix or repair things in a tenant's apartment because of the tenant's actual or perceived religious beliefs or expression.

8.

It is illegal for restaurants, businesses, or any other public accommodation to refuse service to an individual because of their actual or perceived religious belief or faith. A restaurant cannot refuse to seat a Muslim woman because she refuses to take off her hijab. A taxi driver cannot refuse to pick up a customer because of a perceived religion.

9.

It is illegal to threaten, harass, or coercively intimidate a person in public spaces because of their actual or perceived religion; for example, on the train or in a movie theater.

10.

It is illegal to retaliate against an individual, including a religious observant, for filing a claim of discrimination.

* An employer must accommodate an employee's request for reasonable accommodation unless such accommodation poses an undue hardship to the employer.

The NYC Commission on Human Rights ensures that New Yorkers of every faith have a viable venue to report discrimination and enjoy the dignity and respect they deserve. If you believe you have been a victim of discrimination, call 311 and ask for Human Rights or call the Commission's info line directly at 212-416-0197. For more information, visit NYC.gov/HumanRights and follow @NYCCHR on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.