

Dear Service Provider,

The Human Rights Code – what it means for you and your business

Your provincial or territorial Human Rights Code is a piece of legislation that aims to ensure we have a fair and equal society. This includes making sure everyone has an equal opportunity to use services. The Human Rights Code sets out specific duties with which “service providers” have to comply. You are receiving this letter because a blind or partially sighted person believes that you, as a service provider, have broken the law.

The Human Rights Code says that service providers are not allowed to discriminate against people by treating them less favourably because of their protected characteristic. This includes a person with a disability.

Discrimination in providing services means:

- refusing to serve them
- providing a service of a poorer quality than you would provide to the public
- providing a service on worse terms or in a worse manner than you would provide to the public
- terminating a service

Service providers are also not allowed to harass or victimize someone because of their disability.

There is a further specific duty which only applies to disabled people. This is the duty to make reasonable accommodations. You must comply with this duty.

If you do not make a reasonable accommodation, you are breaking the law.

This includes waiving a “no dogs” policy, so people who are blind and partially sighted with guide dogs can enter your premises.

You should realize that disabled people may want to use your service. Not thinking about how to do this is not an excuse or a defense. Making sure that you comply with the law is in your best interests, and there is a good business case for doing this as well.

The individual will give you more details regarding the breach of the Human Rights Code.

We ask you to address this person’s complaint and ensure that you are complying with your obligations under the Code. If you fail to comply with the Human Rights Code, the individual can take you to court. If you lose, then the court could order you to pay compensation of up to \$5,000.

We appreciate your prompt attention to this matter.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Victoria Nolan', with a stylized, cursive script.

Victoria Nolan
Head, Stakeholder Relations and Community Engagement
CNIB Guide Dogs