

# CALIFORNIA LAW PROHIBITS WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

The California Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) enforces laws that protect you from illegal discrimination and harassment in employment based on your actual or perceived:

- **Ancestry**
- **Age** (40 and above)
- **Color**
- **Disability** (physical and mental, including HIV and AIDS)
- **Genetic information**
- **Gender, gender identity, or gender expression**
- **Marital status**
- **Medical condition** (genetic characteristics, cancer or a record or history of cancer)
- **Military or veteran status**
- **National origin** (includes language use restrictions)
- **Race**
- **Religion** (includes religious dress and grooming practices)
- **Sex** (includes pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding and/or related medical conditions)
- **Sexual orientation**

The California Fair Employment and Housing Act (Government Code sections 12900 through 12996) and its implementing regulations (California Code of Regulations, title 2, sections 7285.0 through 8504):

- **Prohibit harassment** of employees, applicants, and independent contractors by any persons and require employers to take all reasonable steps to prevent harassment. This includes a prohibition against sexual harassment, gender harassment, harassment based on pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding and/or related medical conditions, as well as harassment based on all other characteristics listed above.
- **Prohibit employers from limiting or prohibiting the use of any language** in any workplace unless justified by business necessity. The employer must notify employees of the language restriction and consequences for violation.
- **Require that all employers provide information** to each of their employees on the nature, illegality, and legal remedies that apply to sexual harassment. Employers may either develop their own publications, which must meet standards set forth in California Government Code section 12950, or use a brochure from the DFEH.
- **Require employers with 50 or more employees and all public entities to provide sexual harassment prevention training** for all supervisors.
- **Require employers to reasonably accommodate** an employee or job applicant's religious beliefs and practices, including the wearing or carrying of religious clothing, jewelry or artifacts, and hair styles, facial hair, or body hair, which are part of an individual's observance of his or her religious beliefs.
- **Require employers to reasonably accommodate employees or job applicants with a disability** to enable them to perform the essential functions of a job.
- **Permit job applicants and employees to file complaints** with the DFEH against an employer, employment agency, or labor union that fails to grant equal employment as required by law.

• **Prohibit discrimination** against any job applicant or employee in hiring, promotions, assignments, termination, or any term, condition, or privilege of employment.

• **Require employers, employment agencies, and unions** to preserve applications, personnel records, and employment referral records for a minimum of **two years**.

• **Require employers to provide leaves** of up to four months to employees disabled because of pregnancy, childbirth, or a related medical condition.

• **Require an employer to provide reasonable accommodations** requested by an employee, on the advice of her health care provider, related to her pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions.

• **Require employers of 50 or more persons to allow eligible employees to take up to 12 weeks leave** in a 12-month period for the birth of a child; the placement of a child for adoption or foster care; for an employee's own serious health condition; or to care for a parent, spouse, or child with a serious health condition. The law also requires employers to post a notice informing employees of their family and medical leave rights.

• **Require employment agencies to serve all applicants equally**, refuse discriminatory job orders, and prohibit employers and employment agencies from making discriminatory pre-hiring inquiries or publishing help-wanted advertisements that express a discriminatory hiring preference.

• **Prohibit unions from discriminating** in member admissions or dispatching members to jobs.

• **Prohibit retaliation** against a person who opposes, reports, or assists another person to oppose unlawful discrimination.

**The law provides for remedies for individuals who experience prohibited discrimination or harassment in the workplace.** These remedies include hiring, front pay, back pay, promotion, reinstatement, cease-and-desist orders, expert witness fees, reasonable attorney's fees and costs, punitive damages, and emotional distress damages.

**Job applicants and employees:** If you believe you have experienced discrimination, you may file a complaint with the DFEH.

**Independent contractors:** If you believe you have been harassed, you may file a complaint with the DFEH.

Complaints must be filed within one year of the last act of discrimination/harassment or, for victims who are under the age of 18, not later than one year after the victim's eighteenth birthday.

For more information contact (800) 884-1684; TTY (800) 700-2320; videophone for the hearing impaired (916) 226-5285; [contact.center@dfeh.ca.gov](mailto:contact.center@dfeh.ca.gov); or [www.dfeh.ca.gov](http://www.dfeh.ca.gov).

Government Code section 12950 and California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 7287, require all employers to post this document. It must be conspicuously posted in hiring offices, on employee bulletin boards, in employment agency waiting rooms, union halls, and other places employees gather.

*In accordance with the California Government Code and ADA requirements, this publication can be made available in Braille, large print, computer disk, or voice recording as a disability-related accommodation for an individual with a disability. To discuss how to receive a copy in an alternative format, please contact the DFEH at the telephone numbers or e-mail address above.*