

Public accommodation civil rights protections

Learn about civil rights protections related to public accommodations.

The Attorney General's Office enforces state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination in places of public accommodation. The Massachusetts Public Accommodation Law prohibits, among other things, making any distinction, discrimination, or restriction in admission to or treatment in a place of public accommodation based on race, color, religious creed, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, deafness, blindness, or any physical or mental disability, or ancestry. **A place of public accommodation is defined as "any place, whether licensed or unlicensed, which is open to and accepts or solicits the patronage of the general public."**

Places of public accommodation can include, but are not limited to:

- Hotels, inns, and motels;
- Restaurants, bars, and other establishments serving food or drink;
- Theaters, concert halls, sports stadiums, and other places of entertainment;
- Auditoriums, convention centers, lecture halls, and other places of public gathering;
- Sales and rental establishments, including stores, shopping centers, automobile rental agencies, and other retail establishments;
- Service establishments, including laundromats, dry-cleaners, banks, barber shops, travel agents, gas stations, funeral parlors, employment agencies, and providers of professional services such as lawyers, doctors, dentists, accountants, and insurance agents;
- Health care facilities, including dental and medical offices, pharmacies, clinics, hospitals, and nursing homes;
- Transportation services;
- Museums, libraries, galleries, and other places of public display or collection;
- Parks, zoos, amusement parks, and other places of recreation;
- Child care centers, senior citizens centers, homeless shelters, food banks, and other social service establishments;
- Fitness clubs, health spas, bowling alleys, swimming pools, beaches, golf courses, and other places of exercises or recreation.

File a civil rights complaint - Victims of discrimination in places of public accommodation can **file a civil rights complaint** with the Attorney General's Office.