

# Florida Fair Housing Laws Overview

## Legal Foundations

- **Federal Fair Housing Act (Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968)**
- **Florida Fair Housing Act (Sections 760.20–760.37, Florida Statutes)**

Florida's Fair Housing Act is enforced by the **Florida Commission on Human Relations (FCHR)** and mirrors federal law, but may be enforced locally in some cities/counties with additional protections.

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## Protected Classes in Florida

It is illegal to discriminate based on:

1. **Race**
2. **Color**
3. **National Origin**
4. **Religion**
5. **Sex**
6. **Disability (Physical or Mental)**
7. **Familial Status** (e.g., families with children under 18, pregnant women)

**Local Protections:** Some counties (like Miami-Dade, Broward, and Orlando) may extend protections to:

- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity
- Marital status
- Age
- Source of income (e.g., housing vouchers)

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## Prohibited Activities

It is illegal to engage in the following actions if done with discriminatory intent:

- **Refuse to rent or sell housing**
- **Set different terms, conditions, or privileges** (e.g., rent, deposits)
- **Provide different housing services or facilities**
- **Falsely deny housing is available**
- **Engage in discriminatory advertising** (e.g., “no children,” “Christian only”)

- **Harass or intimidate** individuals exercising fair housing rights
- **Fail to accommodate disabilities** (e.g., refusing to allow a service animal)

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## Reasonable Accommodations & Modifications

Landlords must:

- Allow **reasonable accommodations** in rules/policies (e.g., allowing a support animal in a no-pet property)
- Allow **reasonable modifications** to the unit at the tenant's expense (e.g., installing grab bars)

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## Enforcement & Complaints





- **Florida Commission on Human Relations (FCHR)** investigates state-level complaints.
- **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)** handles federal complaints.
- Complaints must be filed **within 1 year** of the alleged discriminatory act.

**To File a Complaint:**

- Online: <https://fchr.myflorida.com/>
- Or contact your local fair housing agency or HUD office.

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## Example Violations

Scenario	Legal or Illegal?
Refusing to rent to a family with children	 Illegal
Charging higher rent to a tenant using a Section 8 voucher (where protected locally)	 Possibly illegal
Denying a tenant's request for a service dog	 Illegal under disability rights
Requiring all tenants to follow the same rules, regardless of background	 Legal (if truly neutral)

Printable Fact Sheet for Leasing Agents:

## Florida Fair Housing Laws – Quick Reference

### Legal Authority:

- **Florida Fair Housing Act** – §§ 760.20–760.37, Florida Statutes
  - **Federal Fair Housing Act** – Title VIII, Civil Rights Act of 1968
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### Protected Classes in Florida:

You may **not discriminate** in housing based on:

- ✓ Race
- ✓ Color
- ✓ National Origin
- ✓ Religion
- ✓ Sex
- ✓ Disability (Mental or Physical)
- ✓ Familial Status (children under 18, pregnant women)

#### **Some local jurisdictions also protect:**

- ✓ Sexual orientation
  - ✓ Gender identity
  - ✓ Source of income
  - ✓ Marital status
  - ✓ Age
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### Prohibited Discriminatory Practices:

- Refusing to rent, sell, or negotiate housing
  - Setting different lease terms, prices, or availability
  - Using discriminatory language in advertising
  - Denying access to housing-related services
  - Harassment or coercion related to fair housing rights
  - Refusing reasonable accommodations for disabilities
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### Reasonable Accommodations:


Landlords **must allow**:


- Emotional support or service animals
  - Accessible parking, communication aids, or policy modifications (e.g., accepting a rent payment date aligned with disability benefits)
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## **Enforcement:**

### **Florida Commission on Human Relations (FCHR)**

 Website: <https://fchr.myflorida.com>

 Phone: (850) 488-7082

 File complaints within **1 year** of the incident

## Fair Housing Checklist:

*This must be present on every leasing agent's desk/workspace.*

### General Rental Practices

- ☐ Apply the **same rental criteria** to all applicants
  - ☐ Use **neutral language** in advertising (no “Christian-only,” “no kids,” etc.)
  - ☐ Avoid questions about personal traits (religion, race, sexual orientation, etc.)
  - ☐ Document the application process and all interactions
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### During Tenancy

- ☐ Respond **equally and promptly** to maintenance requests
  - ☐ Permit **reasonable accommodations** for tenants with disabilities
  - ☐ Do not impose additional fees for service or support animals
  - ☐ Avoid retaliation against tenants asserting their rights
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### Reasonable Accommodation Checklist

- ☐ Request was made (written or verbal)
  - ☐ It relates to a **disability**
  - ☐ Request is **reasonable** and doesn't pose undue burden
  - ☐ Interactive dialogue was offered
  - ☐ Response was provided promptly
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### Lease & Policy Review

- ☐ Lease includes a **non-discrimination clause**
- ☐ No blanket pet restrictions that violate disability protections
- ☐ Policies are **uniformly enforced**
- ☐ Eviction and nonrenewal decisions are **documented and non-discriminatory**