

Equal Employment Opportunity

- Know Your Rights in the District of Columbia -



DC Human Rights Act

In accordance with the District of Columbia Human Rights Act of 1977, as amended, the District of Columbia and employers cannot discriminate on the basis of (actual or perceived):*

- Race
- Color
- Sex (including pregnancy)
- National Origin
- Religion
- Age
- Marital Status
- Personal Appearance
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender Identity or Expression
- Family Responsibilities
- Matriculation
- Political Affiliation
- Genetic Information
- Disability

Sexual harassment and harassment based on other protected categories is prohibited by the Act.

If you believe a violation of the Act has occurred, you can file a complaint with the District of Columbia Office of Human Rights. The process is free and does not require an attorney. Damages can be awarded if it is determined that a violation of the Act did occur.

DC Family and Medical Leave Act

The DC Family and Medical Leave Act of 1990 requires all employers with 20 or more employees to provide up to 16 weeks of unpaid family leave:

- for the birth of a child, an adoption or foster care; or
- to care for a seriously ill family member.

It also allows up to 16 weeks of unpaid medical leave:

- to recover from a serious illness that left the employee unable to work for a total of 32 weeks during a 24 month period.

During the period of leave, an employee should not lose benefits such as seniority or group health plan coverage. The employer may require medical certification and reasonable prior notice when applicable.

The Act applies to employees who have worked for the employer for one year without a break in service and have worked at least 1000 hours during the last 12 months.

DC Parental Leave Act

In accordance with the DC Parental Leave Act of 1994, an employee who is a parent shall be entitled to a total of 24 hours leave** during any 12 month period to attend or participate in school-related events for his or her child.

A parent is defined as the:

- biological mother or father of a child;
- person who has legal custody of a child;
- person who acts as a guardian of a child;
- aunt, uncle, or grandparent of a child; or is
- a person married to a person listed above.

A school-related event means an activity sponsored either by a school or an associated organization.

Any employee shall notify the employer of the desire to leave at least 10 calendar days prior to the event, unless the need to attend the school-related event cannot be reasonably foreseen.

Filing a Complaint of a Violation

To file a complaint about a violation of these laws with the Office of Human Rights, visit:

- **Online** at ohr.dc.gov; or
- **In-Person** at 441 4th Street NW, Suite 570N, Washington, DC 20001.

Questions can also be answered by phone at (202) 727-4559.

* Additional categories protected from discrimination but not in the area of employment include: familial status, source of income, place of residence or business, and status as a victim of an intrafamily offense.

** Leave is unpaid unless the parent elects to use any paid family, vacation, personal or compensatory leave provided by the employer.