

How Do I File a Claim?

If you believe that you are experiencing or have experienced religious discrimination, you should first contact the EEO representative in your agency.

Complaints must be filed in writing within 30 days after you learned of the alleged violation.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact your EEO Office or the Office of the Statewide EEO Coordinator at (410) 767-3800.



SAFE AND CONFIDENTIAL

All investigations into your complaint are strictly confidential. Your information will only be discussed with pertinent individuals who need to know for purposes of investigation and resolution.

If you file a claim or pursue a complaint, oppose discrimination, or participate in an investigation, Maryland law protects you against retaliation by your employer.

It's important to understand that retaliation is not just limited to firing. It includes other adverse actions such as harassment, demotion, and unjustified negative evaluations.

ADDITIONAL FILING INFO.

In addition to filing an initial claim with your agency's EEO Office, you may file a claim with any of the following agencies:

1. Office of the Statewide EEO Coordinator (OSEEOC). Within 10 days after your agency renders a decision on your EEO claim, you may file an appeal with the OSEEOC at:

301 West Preston Street
Suite #607
Baltimore, MD 21201
Phone: (410) 767-3800
Fax: (410) 333-5004
<http://www.dbm.maryland.gov>

2. Maryland Commission on Human Relations (MCHR):

William Donald Schaefer Tower
6 Saint Paul Street, Suite 900
Baltimore, MD 21202
Phone: (410) 767-8600
Fax: (410) 333-1841

3. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC):

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
10 South Howard Street, 3rd Floor
Baltimore, Maryland 21201
410-962-3932
1-800-669-4000



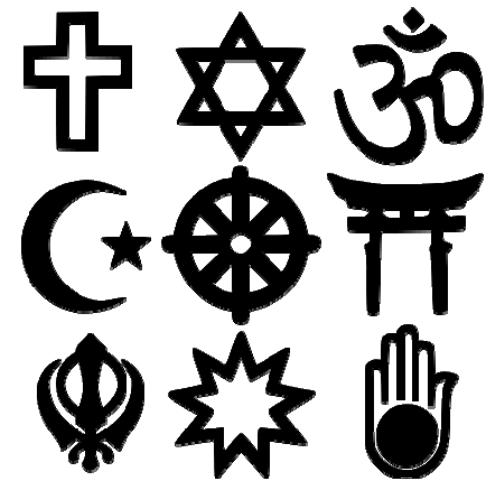
Office of the Statewide Equal Employment Opportunity Coordinator (OSEEOC)

RELIGIOUS

[BELIEF • OPINION • CREED • AFFILIATION]

DISCRIMINATION

Protections for State Employees



State of Maryland
Department of Budget and Management
Office of the Statewide EEO Coordinator

Governor Martin O'Malley
Secretary T. Eloise Foster
State EEO Coordinator
Glynis Watford

DEFINING RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION:

Religious discrimination is the *unfair* treatment of a person because of his or her religious beliefs, opinions or practices.

Religious discrimination extends, not only to an individual's beliefs, opinions, and practices, but also to membership and association with individuals of a particular religious faith.

Additionally, a person's religious beliefs, opinions and practices don't have to be held by a larger, more mainstream religious group. They don't even need to be held by other individuals with similar values.

Religious beliefs, opinions and practices need only to be sincerely and strongly held moral or ethical convictions.

TYPES OF DISCRIMINATION:

- Intentionally denying personal leave to a person because of his or her religious beliefs or practices
- Implementing a facially neutral policy that conflicts with a certain religious belief or practice
- Making remarks about a co-worker's religious practices/ideology to the extent that it creates a hostile work environment
- Forcing an employee to participate – or not participate – in a religious activity as a condition of employment

LEGAL BACKGROUND:

Religious discrimination is prohibited by Title VII of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964*, Maryland's Anti-Discrimination law State Government Title 20 and *State Personnel and Pensions Article §2-302*), and also by Maryland's Code of Fair Employment Practices (*Executive Order 01.01.2007.16*). Only an individual's merit and fitness should be taken into account in employment related decisions.



REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION?

A reasonable religious accommodation may include an adjustment made to a work environment that enables an employee to practice his or her religion, unless doing so would impose an undue hardship on the employer. A reasonable accommodation may include:

- Permitting the use of personnel leave so that an employee can observe a religious holiday
- Exempting an employee from a dress or grooming code, provided that the exemption does not create a safety risk



HOW AM I PROTECTED?

It is **illegal** to discriminate on the basis of religion in regards to:

- recruitment
- hiring
- transferring
- dismissal
- discipline
- work conditions
- promotions
- training
- advertisement
- retirement
- assignment
- performance evaluations

FIGHT DISCRIMINATION:

If you or someone you know is being discriminated against, you can take the following actions:

1. Speak to the harasser. S/he might not know that his or her behavior is offensive. Also, be sure to document the incident(s) thoroughly—date, time, exact words said, and, if applicable, witnesses.
2. Speak to your supervisor. S/he may have to report your information to the EEO Office.
3. Speak to your agency's EEO Office directly.
4. File a claim with the EEO Office.