



Housing Justice For All

Intermountain Fair Housing Council

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Self-Advocacy: How to Investigate Your Fair Housing Complaint

If you have been discriminated against based on a Fair Housing protected class (Race, Color, National Origin, Sex, Familial Status, Disability, Religion) you want to be able to show that:

- A. the incident truly occurred as you see it and,
 - B. that the actions towards you were resulting from discrimination because you are a member of a protected class.
1. Obtain a written record of the incident. (Example: lease violation, eviction notice, policy imposed).
 2. Create a paper trail by having conversations with witnesses and following up with a written letter making reference to the verbal conversation. Ask for a response in writing within 5 business days. Send letters certified mail or deliver with a witness. Always keep a copy.
 3. Inform through the chain of command. If you don't get a written response, and if the situation allows, follow-up with a letter to those people that your landlord is accountable too. Examples would be the property owner, management company etc.
 4. Take pictures and note date, time, place, and names.
 5. Collect statements from witnesses, with dates, signatures, and contact information.

6. Collect statements from neighbors who are not in a protected class and appear to receive different treatment. Collect statements from others in your protected class who have had similar treatment.
7. Have someone who is not or does not seem to be a member of a protected class inquire to see if there is a difference in treatment (preferably someone that does not have anything to gain in falsifying information, that does not have a felony record and will be accessible to you as a future witness). Get a written statement. Follow-up yourself or someone representing your protective class, making the same inquiry. Write a statement. Compare to see if there is a clear difference in treatment.
8. In the state of Idaho, you can tape record conversations as long as you are a participant in it. Voice activated recorders do not seem to work well for this type of investigation.
9. If you file your own 903 HUD Complaint, include all of your documents and keep a copy for yourself. Write a letter that summarizes or paints a picture of how your documents reveal discrimination based on your protected class.
10. You can contact the Intermountain Fair Housing Council at 208-383-0695 or Toll-Free at 800-717-0695 for assistance in investigating and preparing your Fair Housing complaint.

The work that provided the basis for this presentation was supported by funding under a grant with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The creator is solely responsible for the accuracy of the statements and interpretations contained in this presentation. Such interpretations do not necessarily reflect the views of the federal government.