

**United States
Department of Justice
Civil Rights Division**



**Know Your Rights:
Title II of the Civil Rights Act of 1964**

The Civil Rights Division is dedicated to making sure that places of public accommodation do not discriminate against people because of their race, color, religion, or national origin. Public accommodations include restaurants, hotels, and places of exhibition or entertainment (for example, a bar with live music, a sports stadium, or a movie theater). The name of the law that bans this type of discrimination is called Title II of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This law is sometimes called “Title II.”

YOUR RIGHTS UNDER TITLE II

- You have the right to full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, and accommodations of any place of public accommodation.
- You cannot be treated differently by a place of public accommodation because of your race, color, religion, or national origin.
- You have the right to bring your own lawsuit when you believe you have been discriminated by a place of public accommodation.
- In a Title II lawsuit, you cannot receive monetary damages but you can get a court order to stop the place of public accommodation from discriminating against you and others.

EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE VIOLATIONS OF TITLE II

- A hotel receptionist charges African-American guests higher rates than White hotel customers. The same hotel also (1) refuses to rent suites to African-American guests but rents suites to White guests; and (2) denies African-American guests access to the pool but allows White guests access to the pool.
- A bar tells Asian-American and African-American patrons that it is at capacity but allows White patrons to enter the bar.
- A bar turns away a Sikh patron because the patron was wearing a turban. The bar tells the patron that the only types of headwear it allows are baseball caps and cowboy hats.
- In a restaurant, a group of Asian Americans waits for close to an hour to be served, while White customers are served promptly.

Each of these examples could be a violation of Title II.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE TITLE II ENFORCEMENT

- The Civil Rights Division can investigate possible violations of Title II when it believes that there may be a pattern or practice of discrimination in a place of public accommodation.
- A “pattern or practice” generally means that there is more than one individual incident of discrimination, and that there is a policy or repeated discriminatory acts. The Civil Rights Division cannot investigate all complaints of individual discrimination.

If you believe you have been denied access to or equal enjoyment of a public accommodation because of race, color, religion, or national origin, and there is a pattern or practice of this type of discrimination, you can contact the Housing and Civil Enforcement Section by phone at: 202-514-4713 or 800-896-7743, or by e-mail at: fairhousing@usdoj.gov. You can also write to:

U.S. Department of Justice
Civil Rights Division
Housing and Civil Enforcement Section, NWB
950 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20530