

■ ILLINOIS HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

TERMS: Employers who have 15 or more employees during 20 or more weeks this year or last are subject to the employment discrimination provisions of the Human Rights Act, as outlined below. With respect to violations based on a worker's physical or mental disability, the Act applies to any employer with *one or more* employees for any length of time.

Civil Rights Violations — It is a civil rights violation for an employer who is subject to this law to refuse to hire a job applicant, to segregate an employee, or to otherwise discriminate with respect to terms and conditions of employment on the basis of an applicant's or employee's race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, sex, marital status, order-of-protection status, disability, military status, sexual orientation, pregnancy, or unfavorable discharge from military service. Similar acts committed by employment agencies and labor organizations are also unlawful.

Language — It is considered a civil rights violation for an employer to prohibit a language from being spoken by an employee in communications that are unrelated to the employee's duties.

Sexual Harassment — It is a civil rights violation for any covered employer (1) to engage in sexual harassment against an employee, or (2) to permit sexual harassment of an employee by any non-employee or by a non-managerial or non-supervisory employee without taking reasonable steps to stop it.

Arrest Record — In general, it is a civil rights violation for an employer to inquire on a written job application whether an applicant has ever been arrested.

Among other exceptions, the Act does not prohibit employers from hiring or selecting between persons on the basis of bona fide occupational qualifications, or from applying different standards of pay or different employment conditions under a merit or retirement system, as long as the system is not used to get around the anti-discrimination purposes of the law.

ENFORCEMENT: *Illinois Department of Human Rights, Chicago, Illinois 60601 (312-814-6200)*. A worker who has been subjected to unlawful employment discrimination may file a complaint with the Department at any time within 180 days after the violation occurred.

SPECIAL NOTE: It is illegal for an employer to retaliate against an employee or a job applicant because the employee or applicant has opposed unlawful discrimination or sexual harassment, or because he or she has made a charge, filed a complaint, testified, assisted, or participated in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing under this Act.