

WORDS/PHRASES THAT VIOLATE FAIR HOUSING RULES



The Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing because of:

- Race
- Color
- National Origin
- Religion
- Sex
- Familial Status
- Disability

Examples of words and phrases that will violate Fair Housing rules:

Words descriptive of dwelling, landlord, and tenants –

White private home, Colored home, Jewish home, Hispanic residence, adult building.

Words indicative of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin –

- Race-Negro, Black, Caucasian, Oriental, Asian, American Indian.
- Color-White, Black, Colored.
- Religion-Protestant, Christian, Catholic, Jew.
- National origin-Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Philippine, Polish, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Chicano, African, Hispanic, Chinese, Indian, Latino.
- Sex-the exclusive use of words, including those involving the rental of separate units in a single or multi-family dwelling, stating or tending to imply that the housing being advertised is available to persons of only one sex and not the other, except where the sharing of living areas is involved.
- Handicap-crippled, blind, deaf, mentally ill, retarded, impaired, handicapped, physically fit.
- Familial status-adults, children, singles, mature persons.
- Catch words-Words and phrases used in a discriminatory context should be avoided, e.g., restricted, exclusive, private, integrated, traditional, board approval or membership approval.

Colloquialisms –

Words or phrases used regionally or locally which imply or suggest race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin.

Directions to real estate for sale or rent (use of maps or written instructions) –

Directions can imply a discriminatory preference, limitation, or exclusion. For example, references to real estate location made in terms of racial or national origin significant landmarks, such as an existing black development (signal to blacks) or an existing development known for its exclusion of minorities (signal to whites). Specific directions which make reference to a racial or national origin significant area may indicate a preference.

References to a synagogue, congregation or parish may also indicate a religious preference.

Area (location) description –

Names of facilities which cater to a particular racial, national origin or religious group, such as country club or private school designations, or names of facilities which are used exclusively by one sex may indicate a preference.

For more information on Fair Housing guidelines, please visit hud.gov or nar.realtor

IMPORTANT: This list is not all-inclusive but is provided to IMLS members as a Fair Housing reminder when writing any public or member only listing description. A rule of thumb is that the listing agent should promote the features of the listing and not use any language for describing the type of buyer or tenant, or the type of neighborhood. IMLS is not offering legal advice; if you have any questions you should consult with your own legal counsel.