



# Information Bites...

Bite sized chunks of information for families that include a member with a disability

## Human Rights & Reasonable Accommodation

### What is the Human Rights Act?

The Human Rights Act is the Northwest Territories human rights law. It protects and promotes our human rights and is overseen by the Northwest Territories Human Rights Commission. It's against the law to discriminate against or harass people because of:

- disability
- sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity
- race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, ethnic origin or nationality
- a pardoned criminal conviction
- political belief or association
- age
- social condition
- family or marital status, or family affiliation
- religion or creed

Section 1 of the Human Rights Act describes disability as including any of the following:

- any degree of physical disability that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness
- a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability
- a learning disability
- a mental disorder

### What is Discrimination?

To discriminate means we assume negative things about a person or group of people and treat them badly, harass them (continually annoy, attack, or bother), or deny them things they might have (reasonable accommodation). An example of this is not providing a ramp for clients that use wheelchairs, scooters or walkers. It is against the law to discriminate against people in the following 5 areas:

- work and looking for work
- membership in a trade union or professional group
- published materials such as newspapers, pamphlets, magazines or signs
- renting a home or a business space
- public services such as health, education or social services

## **What is Reasonable Accommodation?**

People have different needs. For example, a worker who is visually impaired may have different needs than another worker who is not visually impaired. Employers, landlords and public services must try hard to accommodate peoples' needs. Accommodation is when things are done differently so that peoples' needs are met. The following are examples of accommodations:

### **At a rented apartment or house**

- installing a flashing light fire alarm/door buzzer in a tenants apartment who is hard of hearing
- using a brighter light at the entrance of an apartment for a tenant with low vision
- posting a "no idling" sign by the building entrance for a tenant with a respiratory condition

### **At school**

- allowing a student with a mobility disability to leave class early to switch books between classes
- limiting distractions for a child with Attention Deficit Disorder
- providing a schedule of upcoming events and changes in routine for a student who experiences anxiety

### **At work**

- creating a task checklist for an employee with an intellectual disability
- providing a quiet work space for an employee who is hard of hearing
- providing a screen magnifier and glare guard for an employee with low vision

### **At a business**

- ensuring pathways are free of obstacles for a customer with low vision or mobility disability
- getting items from the top shelves for a person with limited upper body movement
- reading out form information for an individual with a learning disability

Accommodations can help people with disabilities experience equal opportunities and an increased level of participation.

### **For more information, including learning about the complaint process, contact:**

Northwest Territories Human Rights Commission  
Phone: 1-888-669-5575 Website: [www.nwthumanrights.ca](http://www.nwthumanrights.ca)

### **Yellowknife Association for Community Living - Family Project**

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