



5 Things You Should Know About Civil Rights and COVID-19

- 1 **The New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD) protects you from discrimination and harassment** based on actual or perceived race, national origin, religion, disability, and other protected characteristics in employment, housing, and places of public accommodation (places open to the public, including businesses, schools, medical providers, etc.), including when the conduct at issue is related to COVID-19.
- 2 **The LAD's protections in employment mean, for example,** that your employer cannot fire you because you coughed at work and they perceived you to have COVID-19. And if you have east-Asian heritage and a coworker repeatedly harasses you by calling this "the Chinese virus" or claiming that Chinese people "caused" COVID-19 or were responsible for spreading it, your employer must take reasonable action to stop the harassment if they knew or should have known about it. Finally, if your employer lays off workers because of COVID-19, they cannot select employees to lay off based on race, national origin, religion, age, disability, or any other LAD-protected characteristic.
- 3 **Places of public accommodation, like stores and medical facilities,** cannot discriminate based on race, disability, religion, gender identity or expression, or other LAD-protected characteristics in their provision of services. For example, it is unlawful for a medical facility to provide different levels of COVID-19 testing or treatment to Black and white patients because of their race. In addition, the LAD requires places of public accommodation to provide reasonable accommodations to patrons with a disability unless doing so would be an undue burden on their operations. For a grocery store or pharmacy, that means making a contact-free method of obtaining goods available to a person who cannot wear a mask because of a disability. For other places of public accommodation, like gyms and movie theaters, if there is no reasonable accommodation that the establishment can provide that would mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission to its staff and to other patrons and not be an undue burden on its operations, then it can deny entry to people who cannot wear masks because of a disability.
- 4 **The prohibition on discrimination and bias-based harassment in housing means,** for example, that a landlord cannot ask a tenant to move out because they have COVID-19 or because the landlord believes they have COVID-19. Similarly, a landlord cannot refuse to rent a property to you because you are Jewish and they say that Jewish people are responsible for spreading COVID-19.
- 5 **You may be able to take job-protected leave under the New Jersey Family Leave Act (NJFLA)** to care for a family member, or someone who is the equivalent of family, who has a serious health condition, including a diagnosis of COVID-19, or who has been isolated or quarantined because of suspected exposure to COVID-19. You may also be eligible to take job-protected leave to care for your child if their school or place of care was ordered closed due to COVID-19.

To find out more or to file a complaint, go to [NJCivilRights.gov](https://njcivilrights.gov) or call **1.833.NJDCR4U**



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