

Domestic Violence



Women and families across the country are being denied access to, and even evicted from public and subsidized housing because of their status as victims of domestic violence. THESE ACTIONS ARE ILLEGAL. An overwhelming number of statistics show that minority women are the predominant victims of domestic violence.

- 1.3 million women are assaulted by a partner every year
- 85%-95% of victims of domestic violence are women
- 1 in 4 women will experience intimate partner violence at some point in her life
- African-American women experience intimate partner violence at a rate 35% higher than white women
- Native American women are victims at more than double the rate of other groups

This data shows that domestic violence can be considered an issue of discrimination - one that Fair Housing can help solve. A landlord cannot terminate a lease, refuse to renew or enter a lease, or retaliate against a tenant solely because the tenant, or one of the tenant's close associates, was a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Landlords should change the locks at the tenant's request if the tenant can provide the landlord with a restraining order against a past abuser. Landlords or housing managers may request documentation to prove that the tenant is indeed a victim of domestic violence. In order to provide such proof, tenants may present third party documents including court records, police reports, or documents signed by an employee, agent, or medical professional from where the victim has sought assistance.

Here are some laws that housing providers should be aware of when attempting to evict a tenant who has been a victim of domestic violence:

- Housing providers may not evict tenants for calling the police if the call was a result of domestic violence. This holds true even if the housing provider has a strict "zero-tolerance" crime policy.
- The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) prohibits evictions of victims due to property damages if the damages were a result of domestic violence.
- Evictions can only take place after the housing or subsidy providers have taken every possible measure to eliminate the threat to the victim (Ex. property transferring, increasing police presence, barring the abuser from the premises).
- If an eviction is filed, a complaint or lawsuit may be brought against the landlord on the grounds of discrimination, due to the fact that domestic violence disproportionately impacts women and minorities.

Domestic violence victims who are denied housing, evicted, or deprived of assistance based on the violence in their homes are being illegally discriminated against. If you suspect that you or someone you know has been discriminated against, please contact the city of Canton Fair Housing Department at 330-438-4133. We are located at 218 Cleveland Ave SW, 5th Floor, Canton, OH 44702.

Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or 330-453-SAFE (7233)
<http://www.thehotline.org/ or domesticviolenceproj.org>
Ohio Domestic Violence Network: 800-934-9840

