

guide to  
**fair housing**  
advertising

Title VIII, Civil Rights Act of 1968  
establishes the policies and practices  
for fair housing advertising —

§ 109.5 Policy

It is the policy of the United States to provide, within constitutional limitations, for fair housing throughout the United States. The provisions of the Fair Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 36000, et seq.) make it unlawful to discriminate in the sale, rental, and financing of housing, and in the provision of brokerage and appraisal services, because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin. Section 804(c) of the Fair Housing Act, 42 U.S.C. 3604(c), as amended, makes it unlawful to make, print, or publish, or cause to be made, printed, or published, any notice, statement, or advertisement, with respect to the sale or rental of a dwelling, that indicates any preference, limitation, or discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin, or an intention to make any such preference, limitation, or discrimination. However, the prohibitions of the act regarding familial status do not apply with respect to *housing for older persons*, as defined in section 807(b) of the act.

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## § 109.20 Use of words, phrases, symbols, and visual aids

The following words, phrases, symbols, and forms typify those most often used in residential real estate advertising to convey either overt or tacit discriminatory preferences or limitations. In considering a complaint under the Fair Housing Act, the Department will normally consider the use of these and comparable words, phrases, symbols, and forms to indicate a possible violation of the act and to establish a need for further proceedings on the complaint, if it is apparent from the context of the usage that discrimination within the meaning of the act is likely to result.

- (a) *Words descriptive of dwelling, landlord, and tenants.*  
White private home, Colored home, Jewish home, Hispanic residence, adult building.
- (b) *Word indicative of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin —*
  - (1) *Race* — Negro, Black, Caucasian, Oriental, American Indian
  - (2) *Color* — White, Black, Colored
  - (3) *Religion* — Protestant, Christian, Catholic, Jew
  - (4) *National origin* — Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Philippine, Polish, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Chicano, African, Hispanic, Chinese, Indian, Latino.
  - (5) *Sex* — the exclusive use of words in advertisements, 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. Nothing in this part restricts advertisements of dwellings used exclusively for dormitory facilities by educational institutions.
  - (6) *Handicap* — crippled, blind, deaf, mentally ill, retarded, impaired, handicapped, physically fit. Nothing in this part restricts the inclusion of information about the availability of accessible housing in advertising of dwellings.
  - (7) *Familial status* — adults, children, singles, mature persons. Nothing in this part restricts advertisements of dwellings which are intended and operated for occupancy by older persons and which constitute *housing for older persons* as defined in Part 100 of this title.

- (8) *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.*
- (c) *Symbols or logotypes* — Symbols or logotypes which imply or suggest race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin.
- (d) *Colloquialisms* — Words or phrases used regionally or locally which imply or suggest race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin.
- (e) *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 religion preference.
- (f) *Area (location) description* — Names of facilities which cater to a particular racial, national origin or religious group, such as country club or private school designation, or names of facilities which are used exclusively by one sex may indicate a preference.

*Use of Equal Housing Opportunity logotype, statement, or slogan* — All advertising of residential real estate for sale, rent, or financing should contain an equal housing opportunity logo, statement, or slogan as a means of educating the homeseeking public that the property is available to all persons regardless of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin.



*Publishers' Notice* — All publishers should publish at the beginning of the real estate advertising section a notice which includes a statement regarding the coverage of any local fair housing or human rights ordinance prohibiting discrimination in the sale, rental or financing of dwellings.

*Sample Notice:*

*Publishers' Notice* — All real estate advertised herein is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act, which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitation, or discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin, or intention to make any such preference, limitation, or discrimination."

We will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of the law. All persons are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised are available on an equal opportunity basis.

## **NYPA's Rule of Thumb:**

Describe the property,  
not the preferred buyer or renter!

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT

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