

## Fair Housing Advertising – Guidelines To Compliance

Fair Housing advertising guidelines are a must when developing your marketing and advertising content.

[Fair Housing Advertising - Guidelines To Compliance \(fairhousinginstitute.com\)](http://fairhousinginstitute.com)

### Fair Housing Advertising Media

Advertising under the Fair Housing Act doesn't just mean ads in newspapers. The law says you can't "make, print, or publish. . . any notice, statement, or advertisement . . . that indicates any preference, limitation, or discrimination based on a person's race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin."

That includes such things as:

- Applications
- Flyers
- Brochures
- Deeds
- Signs
- Banners
- Posters
- Billboards
- Even pictures in your office

It also means that the things you say about your property in writing, over the phone or in person are covered. Expressing an illegal preference or limitation to one of your fellow agents, brokers, employees, prospective sellers, renters, or to any other person in connection with the sale or rental of your property is illegal. Here are two examples of illegal advertising that you may not have realized were violations of the Fair Housing Act.

1. A maintenance man tells a passer-by that "only real Americans" lived in the apartment complex where he worked.
2. A rental office is decorated with many large pictures of the residents participating in the community's facilities and amenities such as exercising in the weight room, swimming, and playing volleyball and tennis. However, all of the pictures are of white, young, "yuppies;" none of the pictures shows children, or persons of different races or nationalities.

### Policies and Procedures

Condominiums, apartment complexes and mobile home parks that have written rules and regulations have always been fertile breeding grounds for Fair Housing advertising violations.

Update policies and procedures and make sure they are current with Fair Housing advertising regulations.

### Phrases and Words To Avoid (see following page for words)

The law says you can't use "words, phrases, photographs, illustrations, symbols or forms of any kind" which tend to give the impression that your property is available (or not available) only to certain types of people. Believe it or not, it is still fairly common to see a "no children, no pets" ad. "No pets" is okay; "no children" is not. It is also illegal to advertise for a "Christian roommate," or to indicate any other type of religious preference.

HUD provides Fair Housing advertising guidelines as to what is acceptable in Fair Housing advertising. While advertisements cannot state a preference or limitation based on race or color, statements such as "master bedroom" and "desirable neighborhood" are not illegal. And while religious discrimination is illegal, using words like "kosher meals served on the premises," or including phrases such as "Merry Christmas" or "Happy Easter" in an ad is not discriminatory either.

There are even words that are restricted when it comes to people with disabilities. Obviously statements such as "no wheelchairs" are illegal. However, using phrases such as "great view," "walk-in closets" or "walk to bus stop" is acceptable. There are certain "buzz" words you should still avoid. These are words or phrases that have been associated with discriminatory practices in the past. They include such words as "restricted," "exclusive," "limited," and so forth.


The "good news" is that HUD will consider your use of certain kinds of advertising words and slogans to be evidence of your compliance with the Fair Housing Act. For example, using HUD's "[Equal Housing Opportunity](#)" or fair housing logo in your ads will be viewed with approval. Displaying a fair housing poster in your office is another way to advertise in a positive manner. Incidentally, to put one more rumor to rest – use of the logo is not required.

Another way to produce positive advertisements is to vary the use of human models in your ads so that both majority and minority groups in your community, both sexes, persons with disabilities and, when appropriate, children of all ages are represented.

### Fair Housing Advertising – The Bottom Line

If you or your team are in need of training be sure to check out our [Fair Housing online course](#) information.

**IMPORTANT:** This list is **not** all-inclusive, but is provided 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.

ACCEPTABLE 		
Credit Check Required Den Equal Housing Opportunity Family Room First Time Buyer Fixer-Upper Great for Family In-Law Apartment Luxury Townhomes Nanny Room Near Mass Transit Near Golf Course (Neighborhood Name) Nice No Drinking No Drugs No Drug Users No Smoking Number of Bedrooms Nursery Nursing Home On Bus Route Private Entrance	Retirees * Seniors * Senior Citizens * Senior Housing * Grandma's House * Golden Agers * Sophisticated Student Housing Within Walking Distance of Master Suite Walk in Closet Gated Community Description of Amenities Quality Construction Quiet Reference Required (School District) (School Name) Security Provided Play Area Privacy Private Driveway View of ____	Senior Discount ____ Square Feet Starter Home Traditional Style Tranquil Setting Verifiable Income Board Approval Required Close to Downtown or Stadium Domestic Quarters Female or Male Roommate Handyman's Dream Screened for Income and Credit Membership Approval Required Near Country Club No College Students Prestigious Quality Neighborhood Quiet Neighborhood Private Setting With View

UNACCEPTABLE



Able-bodied  
Adult Living  
Active Adult Community  
Adults Only  
Agile  
Couples only  
Safe neighborhood  
Criminal Record Not Accepted  
Felons Need Not Apply  
Empty Nesters  
Ethnic References  
Exclusive Neighborhood  
Racial References  
Religious References  
Healthy Only  
No Gays or Lesbians  
Heterosexuals Only  
Mature Couple  
Mature Individual  
Mature Person(s)  
Must Be Employed

Reference to Nationality  
Near Church(es)  
Near Synagogue  
Near Temple  
Newlyweds  
No AIDS  
No Alcoholics  
Only Christians Need Apply  
No Children (unless HOPA\*)  
No Teenagers (unless HOPA\*)  
No Play Area  
No Unemployed  
Not for Handicapped  
Older Person  
Only One Child  
One Person  
Physically Fit  
Quiet Tenants Only  
Singles Only  
Single Person  
Stable



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ACCEPTABLE	CAUTION	UNACCEPTABLE	UNACCEPTABLE
Credit Check Required	Active	Able-bodied	(Nationality)
Den	Board Approval Required	Adult Living	Near Church(es)
Equal Housing Opportunity	Close to _____	Adult Community	Near Synagogue
Family Room	Domestic Quarters	Adults Only	Near Temple
First Time Buyer	Female(s) Only	African	Newlyweds
Fixer-Upper	Female Roommate	Agile	No AIDS
Great for Family	(Gender)	Asian	No Alcoholics
In-Law Apartment	Gentleman's Farm	Black Neighborhood	No Blacks
Luxury Townhomes	Grandma's House *	Black Only	No Blind
Nanny Room	Golden Agers *	Catholic	No Children
Near Mass Transit	Handyman's Dream	Caucasian	No Crippled
Near Golf Course	Male(s) Only	Chicano	No Deaf
(Neighborhood Name)	Male Roommate	Chinese	No Drinkers
Nice	Man (Men) Only	Christian	No Impaired
No Drinking	Membership Approval Required	Colored	No Mentally Handicapped
No Drugs	Near _____	Couple	No Mentally Ill
No Drug Users	Near Country Club	Couples Only	No Play Area
No Smoking	No Students	Empty Nesters	No Retarded
Number of Bedrooms	(Number of Persons)	(Ethnic References)	No Unemployed
Nursery	Prestigious	Exclusive (i.e. Neighborhood)	Not for Handicapped
Nursing Home	Quality Neighborhood	Executive	Older Person
On Bus Route	Quiet Neighborhood	Filipino	One Child
Play Area	Retirees *	Healthy Only	One Person
Privacy	Secure	Hispanic	Oriental
Private Driveway	Seniors *	Hungarian	Physically Fit
Private Entrance	Senior Citizens *	Indian	Polish
Private Setting	Senior Housing *	Irish	Protestant
Quality Construction	Single Woman/Man	Integrated	Puerto-Rican
Quiet	Sophisticated	Jewish	Quiet Tenants
Reference Required	Students	Landlord (description of)	Sane Tenant Only
(School District)	Two People	Latino	Shrine
(School Name)	Within Walking Distance	Mature Couple	Singles Only
Security Provided	Woman (Women) Only	Mature Individual	Single Person
Senior Discount		Mature Person(s)	Stable
_____ Square Feet		Mexican-American	Tenant (description of)
Starter Home		Mormon Temple	White Neighborhood
Traditional Style		Mosque	White Only
Tranquil Setting		Must Be Employed	
Verifiable Income			
View of _____			
With View			