



HATE CRIMES & BIAS INCIDENTS FACT SHEET

What is a hate crime?

Under federal and Pennsylvania laws, a hate crime is a criminal act (e.g. vandalism, threats, assault, and murder) that is motivated by prejudice or bias and is directed at people because of their real or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, or ancestry. Philadelphia also has a local hate crimes ordinance that covers offenses committed because of a victim's real or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, gender, or disability.

What is a bias incident?

A bias incident is an act that is motivated by prejudice or bias, but is not a crime (e.g. being called a derogatory name or seeing someone holding a sign with a racist message). While bias incidents are not criminal, they are offensive and may be discriminatory acts that are protected by law (e.g. not providing equal service to people of a specific cultural community.)

What should I do if I see a hate crime being committed?

It is crucial that you respond immediately when you believe a hate crime is being committed or has occurred. Call 911 and report it as soon as possible especially if someone is injured or there is risk of continuing violence.

If I am a victim of a hate crime or bias incident, what should I do?

If you are a victim of any crime, you should call 911 to report it and to get further assistance (e.g. medical attention and victim services). To report hate crimes and bias incidents (non-emergency), you should contact us, the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations (PCHR) at 215-686-4670 or pchr@phila.gov. We also have an anonymous hotline at 215-686-2856.

How can the PCHR Help?

The PCHR responds to acts of bias in multiple ways. We can address community tensions through facilitated discussions, mediation or other techniques to begin the healing process with all affected parties. When a discriminatory act occurs in the workplace, housing or place of public accommodation, we can enforce the City's anti-discrimination laws. Also, we partner with local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies, victim services, and various community networks to ensure that the City as a whole is responding to these occurrences with a united and coordinated effort.

If I'm facing or see another coworker facing implicit or explicit racism, sexism, bigotry or discrimination in the workplace, what should I do?

If you see a bias act occur among peers, say something. Be an "upstander" – not a bystander—and call it out or report it to a supervisor. You can also contact the PCHR if you feel that you or another coworker is the target of prejudice and discriminatory behavior.