

How does federal law protect me against hate crimes?

Federal law addresses hate crimes primarily through the Civil Rights Statutes (*U.S.C. Titles 18 and 42*) which includes the following:

Conspiracy Against Rights makes it illegal for two or more people to conspire to injure, threaten, or intimidate someone in the exercise of any right provided by the U.S. Constitution.

Prevention or Intimidation address intimidation based on race/ethnicity in housing or the exercise of certain federally protected rights. In addition, Federal law provides for increased sentences where a defendant selects a victim because of race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender or disability. When a hate crime results in bodily injury or fire is used, the crime is a felony. It is a capital crime if death results.

What are Maryland's hate crimes laws and how can they protect me?

Title 20 of the State Government Article, Annotated Code of Maryland, enforced by the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights, protects people against hate crimes in their homes; from injury, intimidation, or harassment by neighbors; and interference with fair housing rights based on race, national origin, sex, familial status, color, religion, marital status, physical and mental disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

Maryland law addresses hate crimes specifically through Criminal Law Article §10-301. It is illegal in Maryland, punishable by fine and/or imprisonment, for any person to vandalize or attempt to vandalize any religious property, or to interfere by force or the threat of force with any person in the exercise of their religious beliefs.

It is also forbidden to damage, destroy, burn, or otherwise vandalize the property of a person or an institution because of their race or beliefs, or to harass or commit a crime against any person because of their "race, color, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, gender, disability, national origin, or because another is homeless."

This statute also provides an extra sentencing enhancement for those crimes motivated by hate.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE

Response to Bias and Hate



For more information on crime in Montgomery County, visit the MCPD website:

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/pol

Or follow the MCPD on social media!





What is a hate crime?

A hate crime is a criminal act that appears to be completely or partly motivated by race, color, religion, ethnic background, sexual orientation, gender, or disability (homelessness is also considered a bias status in Maryland). It is not a separate or distinct crime, but rather a traditional offense motivated by the offender's bias (hate). Other incidents, like name calling or the use of hateful speech/language may leave someone feeling victimized, but it does not rise to the level of a hate crime. The Montgomery County Police Department carefully investigates all incidents of bias in order to determine motivation and the appropriate charges, when applicable.

I believe that I was a victim of a bias incident or hate crime. What can I do?

- Report the incident to your local or state law enforcement agency or human rights agency. Even if you do not have any information on the suspects or there is no physical injury or property damage, your report will serve as important investigative information if a future incident occurs.
- Do not clean up or destroy any evidence related to the crime until the police arrive and investigate.
- Get help. Your local victim assistance and human rights agencies are here to help you. **The MCPD has Victim Assistance Coordinators at each district station.**

How can I help if I witness a bias incident?

- **Report it.** Call 911, even if it's not a physical attack. Be a good witness.
- **Speak out, but maintain respect;** don't escalate the incident. Take action so people know the behavior is unacceptable.
- **Learn more.** Raise cultural awareness and encourage diversity among family and friends. Support victims of bias crimes. Work with community partners to create healthy, safe, and violence-free environments. **The MCPD Community Engagement Division is available to speak to community members about safety and prevention.**

Hate Crime Hotline

If you do not know who your local victim service providers are or you need to reach your local human rights agency, call the Maryland Hate Crimes Hotline at: **1-800-637-6247** between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. weekdays.



NO ONE should be a target.

If you believe a bias/hate crime has occurred, please call 301-279-8000, or dial 9-1-1 in an emergency, to report the incident to MCPD immediately.

LOCAL RESOURCES

Montgomery County Police District Stations

1st District - Rockville
240-773-6070

2nd District - Bethesda
240-773-6700

3rd District - Silver Spring
240-773-6800

4th District - Wheaton
240-773-5500

5th District - Germantown
240-773-6200

6th District - Montgomery Village
240-773-5700

MCPD Community Engagement Division
MCPD_Engaged@montgomerycountymd.gov

Montgomery County Office of Human Rights
240-777-8450

Montgomery County Office of Community Partnerships
240-777-2558

Maryland State Police
800-525-5555

State of Maryland Commission on Civil Rights - Baltimore Office
William Donald Schaefer Tower
6 Saint Paul Street, Suite 900
Baltimore, MD 21202-1631
Phone: 410-767-8600
TTY/TTD: 410-333-1737
Toll Free: 1-800-637-6247