

## HOW CAN I HELP PREVENT HATE CRIMES?

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- I Work to strengthen and improve hate crime laws at the State and National level;
- I Offer assistance by working with victims of hate crimes;
- I Learn how to educate your community about hate crimes.

### RESOURCES

#### Maryland Commission on Human Relations

800-637-6247

OR

410-767-8600

TTY/TDD NUMBER: 410-333-1737

Website: [www.mchr.state.md.us](http://www.mchr.state.md.us)

E-mail: [mchr@mail.mchr.state.md.us](mailto:mchr@mail.mchr.state.md.us)

#### Maryland State Police

800-525-5555

301-791-3060 FAX

### LOCAL HUMAN RIGHTS AGENCIES

#### Maryland Commission on Human Relations

410-767-8600

#### Western Maryland Office

301-797-3060

#### Eastern Shore Offices

410-221-2565

410-548-3243

#### Southern Maryland Office

310-475-4118

#### Annapolis City Human Relations Commission

410-263-7996

#### Anne Arundel County Human Relations Commission

410-222-1155

#### Baltimore City Human Relations Commission

410-396-3141

#### Baltimore County Human Relations Commission

410-887-5917

#### Calvert County Commission on Human Relations

410-535-4400

#### City of Cumberland Community Relations

301 759-6433

#### Frederick County Human Relations Council

301-694-1109

#### Harford County Human Relations Commission

410-638-3327

#### Howard County Human Rights Commission

410-313-6430

#### Montgomery County Human Relations Commission

240-777-8540

#### Pocomoke City Human Relations Commission

410-957-0325

#### Prince Georges County Human Relations Commission

301-883-6170

#### City of Rockville Human Relations Commission

301-209-3308

#### St. Mary's County Human Relations Commission

301-475-4621

# Maryland's response to *Hate Crimes*

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**WHAT is a Hate Crime?**

**WHAT Can I Do If I Am the  
Victim of a Hate Crime?**

**HOW Can I Help Prevent  
Hate Crimes?**

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Brochure available in alternate formats upon request.

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PREPARED BY  
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Maryland Hate Crimes Task Force  
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## WHAT IS A HATE CRIME?

**A Hate Crime** is an act that appears to be completely or partly motivated by race, religion, ethnic background, sexual orientation or disability. To be considered a hate incident, the act is not required to be a crime under any federal, state, or local statute. Vandalism to any place of worship, assault on an individual, the bombing of a building – each of these examples can be a hate crime – if it meets any one of the following criteria:

- I Racial, religious or ethnic statements are made during the incident;
- I Hate group symbols are displayed;
- I The motive of a crime is to harm, injure or intimidate a particular group or organization;
- I The victim perceives it to be a hate crime.

## 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 of Intimidation** – addresses intimidation based on race and ethnicity in housing or the exercise of certain other 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 & HOW CAN THEY PROTECT ME?

Article 49B, Annotated Code of Maryland, enforced by the Maryland Commission on Human Relations, protects people against hate crimes in their homes, from harassment by neighbors, or interference with fair housing rights based on race, national origin, sex, familial status, color, religion, marital status, physical and mental disability or sexual orientation.

Maryland law addresses hate crimes specifically through Article 27, 470A – Religious and Ethnic Crimes. Under Article 27, 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 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 or national origin.”

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

## I BELIEVE THAT I WAS THE VICTIM OF A HATE CRIME. WHAT CAN I DO?

1. Report the incident to your local 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.
2. Do not destroy any evidence related to the crime. Keep all letters and answering machine tapes. Do not clean up any vandalism until the police arrive and investigate.
3. Get help. Your local victim assistance agencies and human rights agencies are here to help **you**.

## HATE CRIMES 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.