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## FAQs

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# Rights Online

### Feature Stories

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## OHRC welcomes three new partners

In January, Chief Commissioner Keith Norton announced three new partnerships to enhance the Commission's efforts to promote understanding of human rights.

### Partnership - Increasing Public Awareness

The first partnership is with [CCH Canadian Ltd.](#), one of Canada's largest and most respected information providers for human resource, legal and accounting professionals. CCH Canadian will be publishing *Human Rights Policy in Ontario*, a compendium of the Commission's human rights policies and guidelines. As a valuable resource for human rights specialists, human resources professionals and others, this publication will bring together many key documents into one updated collection.

"CCH Canadian's world-wide reputation in publishing information products has made it a preferred partner of Canadian professionals for over 50 years. We are delighted to have CCH Canadian as our partner in increasing public awareness of human rights issues and expanding our distribution efforts," said Mr. Norton.

CCH Canadian President and CEO James de Gaspé Bonar said, "Our priority is to provide our customers with quick access to the top-quality information they need. We are very proud to work with such a high quality product as Human Rights Policy in Ontario and to partner with the Ontario Human Rights Commission on this project."

Policies and guidelines will continue to be available free of charge from the Commission's Web site.

### Partnership - Working with the Community

As reported in an earlier version of [Rights Online](#), the Commission has

### Commission News

[Click here](#) to subscribe to **Rights Online** or join our mailing list.

### Legal Decisions

Review a selected list of current [Board of Inquiry decisions](#)

### Filing a Complaint

Do you have a human rights complaint? Have a look at our [Complainant's Guide](#)

### Our staff suggests these noteworthy human rights sites

- [The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union](#) (English and French)
- [Ontario Courts](#) (English and French)
- [Canadian Race Relations Foundation](#) (English and French)
- [Canadian Human Rights Reporter](#) (English only)
- [International Year of the Volunteer](#) (English and French)

partnered with The [Council of Agencies Serving South Asians](#) (CASSA) to develop a plain language Complainant's Guide in English, French and six South Asian languages: Urdu, Bengali, Hindi, Tamil, Punjabi and Gujarati. CASSA is a non-profit community organization with which the Commission has worked for several years. It is an umbrella organization of agencies which provide community services to the South Asian Community. The brochure identifies the rights and responsibilities of Ontarians and how to get more information from the Human Rights Commission about filing a complaint. This joint effort enhances the Commission's outreach to one of the fastest growing and diverse communities in Ontario.

## Partnership - Fighting Racism

The Commission has also entered into a partnership with the [Canadian Race Relations Foundation](#) to develop a video and study guide on racism. The video will allow people in schools, workplace seminars, church groups or union meetings to explore their biases and how those biases affect themselves, others, and society at large. The project is part of the CRRF's "See people for who they really are. Unite against racism" campaign which was initiated in 1999. The campaign has involved numerous partners including the Bank of Montreal, the Canadian Teacher's Federation and the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

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## City of Ottawa accommodates visual disabilities



In the 1997 Ottawa municipal elections, two visually impaired gentlemen were unable to cast a secret ballot because the City was unprepared to accommodate their disability. As part of a settlement in the complaint that was filed, the [City of Ottawa](#) reviewed its practices and ensured that accommodation for persons with visual disabilities was available during the 2000 municipal election.

The settlement reaffirms the right of all citizens to cast a ballot independently as guaranteed by law in Ontario. Chief Commissioner Norton commended the City of Ottawa's action. "Under the Ontario [Human Rights Code](#), the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities must be accommodated, whenever possible, in such a way that their dignity is respected," he commented.

The complainants were also pleased that the City of Ottawa had acknowledged its legal duty to ensure that visually impaired persons have secret and independent access to the municipal ballot. "Thanks to our joint efforts with the Ontario Human Rights Commission and the City of Ottawa, systemic barriers in the electoral process which had prevented visually impaired persons from casting their ballots secretly and independently were both identified and addressed."

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## Updated Policies



### Policy on Drug and Alcohol Testing

In December 2000 the Commission reissued the [Policy on Drug and Alcohol Testing](#) following the Ontario Court of Appeal's decision in [Entrop v. Imperial Oil Ltd.](#)

The Entrop case involved a human rights complaint that dealt with the introduction of a workplace policy requiring employees in safety sensitive positions to disclose a past or current substance abuse problem. In this case, although the problem had occurred eight years earlier and there had been no further incident of substance abuse. The employee was immediately reassigned to another position at which time he filed a human rights complaint alleging discrimination because of a handicap.

In its ruling, the Court confirmed that both drug and alcohol dependencies are handicaps within the meaning of the Ontario *Human Rights Code*. The Court also made significant rulings on a number of other related issues including pre-employment drug testing, random drug testing, random alcohol testing using breathalysers, required disclosure of past substance abuse problems and automatic reassignment of positions. These issues are addressed in the revised Policy.

## Policy on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

The Commission has also updated its 1996 [Policy on Female Genital Mutilation](#) ("FGM"). FGM is gender-specific discrimination related to the historical suppression and subjugation of women and female children. While this aspect of the policy remains unchanged, a new section has been added to reflect recent developments under the Ontario Child and Family Services Act that include a duty to report information with respect to a child who is in need of protection. The revised policy also includes reference to amendments under the Criminal Code that define the performance of FGM as aggravated assault.

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## Barrie women to receive equal services from YMCA



A Board of Inquiry decision released this past December requires that [Barrie YMCA](#) build a women's facility of comparable size and amenities to its men's premium membership facilities by September 1, 2001.

Ellen Anderson and Lucia O'Neill filed a complaint with the Commission that alleged women could become regular members of the Barrie YMCA but they were unable to buy premium memberships that were available to men.

"Women have the same right to programs and the services that come with such programs," stated the Chief Commissioner. He added that, "Denying services on the basis of sex is a violation of the Ontario *Human Rights Code*."

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## Visit our booth at HRP AO



Booth 122, Corridor Level  
Sheraton Centre  
February 21, 22 and 23 (Toronto, Ontario)  
**Human Resources Professionals Association of Ontario** annual conference

For more information please visit:  
[http://conf.hrpa.org/virtual\\_expo/booth\\_home.asp?ex=71](http://conf.hrpa.org/virtual_expo/booth_home.asp?ex=71)

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