

By proactively addressing the challenges of racism in the workplace, employers can meet their legal obligations while building respectful, innovative spaces for businesses to thrive.



Is racial discrimination common in the workplace?

A 2025 survey of im/migrants by Impact North Shore reveals that **18% of respondents** said they have experienced race-based discrimination in the past year.

Almost **one-third (32%)** of these respondents said they experienced it **at work** or when **applying for a job**.



What can racial discrimination in the workplace look like?

It can show up in many ways. It can be subtle or obvious, intentional or unintentional. It can come from the employer, supervisor, or co-workers. Some examples are:

- Not hiring, training, or promoting someone because of their race
- Additional or unfair scrutiny or criticism for racialized workers
- Paying racialized workers less for performing the same work
- Bullying, harassment, jokes, slurs, name-calling, or mocking gestures
- Excluding, ignoring, or avoiding someone because of their race
- Physical or verbal intimidation, threats, or attack



Why does this matter?

Racial discrimination is **harmful to workers' physical and psychological safety and wellbeing**. It can lead to disengagement, trauma, depression, stress, as well as physical health challenges such as high blood pressure. It can also contribute to the under-utilization of racialized workers' education and skills, limit their career progression, and create wage gaps.

Racial discrimination is also **costly for employers** as it contributes to:

- Lower workplace morale
- Higher worker absenteeism and turnover
- Increased workplace health and safety risks
- Challenges in hiring and retention
- Reduced productivity
- Negative organizational reputation

There can also be financial costs, including legal costs and fines, for employers who do not meet their obligations under Canadian laws.



What are the legal obligations of employers to protect workers in BC?

- [BC Human Rights Code](#): Employers must uphold human rights and ensure job seekers and workers are protected from discrimination based on their identity, including race, colour, ancestry, and place of origin.
- [BC Workers Compensation Act](#): Employers must take measures to address discriminatory behaviour that occurs as part of bullying and harassment.



How can employers build a workplace that is free of racial discrimination?

- [Ensure familiarity with legal obligations](#) under the *BC Human Rights Code* and the *BC Workers Compensation Act* for safe and discrimination-free workplaces
- [Develop and implement workplace policies](#) to prevent and appropriately respond to racial discrimination when it is reported
- Make sure everyone in the workplace – supervisors to workers – are [trained in organizational policies](#) related to acceptable workplace behaviour, discrimination-free workplaces, and incident reporting
- Invest in [ongoing training](#) to promote anti-racist, equitable, inclusive, and psychologically safe workplaces for all
- [Review organizational policies](#) on hiring, promotions, compensation, health and safety, incident reporting, and other topics to ensure it promotes equity



What resources are available?

- [Impact North Shore Racial Equity Portal](#): Learn about racism, and how to foster racial equity in the workplace.
- [Employment Equity Toolkit - BC's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner](#): Learn how to advance employment equity including workplace accommodations, compensation, complaints, hiring, promotions, and other related topics.
- [BC Racist Incident Helpline](#) at 1-833-457-5463: Seek support if you have experienced or witnessed racism.