



# Fair Housing Newsletter

*Keeping you current on fair housing news and issues*



 LAW OFFICE OF  
**ANGELITA E. FISHER**

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## Screening Co. Settles Fair Housing Lawsuit

Safe Rent Solutions has settled a Massachusetts lawsuit alleging the company violated fair housing laws by using certain AI screening tools. The cost of settlement? \$2.3 million.

The lawsuit alleged that Safe Rent Solutions violated state and federal fair housing laws when it used algorithms that generated lower scores for applicants using housing vouchers and also considered factors such as credit history and non-rental debts to produce a proprietary score for landlords to evaluate potential tenants. According to the lawsuit, these algorithms explicitly impacted Black, Hispanic, and voucher-using applicants.

The company has agreed to stop displaying AI-generated scores for renters using vouchers nationwide as part of the settlement. This change would eliminate the appearance of AI scores in its model. Furthermore, the company will not recommend whether landlords should accept or deny applicants using housing vouchers. Landlords must evaluate these applicants based on their complete rental history, not the company's AI-generated scores.

The settlement also creates a fund for Massachusetts renters who faced denials for housing due to the scoring system. Despite the settlement, the company maintains that its practices were legally compliant. Regardless, they settled to avoid the high costs and distractions of continued litigation.



Note From the Editor: Happy New Year! Let's start the year off right. Register everyone now for the March Three-Party Fair Housing Webinar Series and fair housing training will be complete for 2025. See page 4 for more information.



## Court Dismisses Tenant's Fair Housing Complaint

A Federal Court in New York has dismissed a tenant's fair housing complaint alleging the landlord failed to replace the elevators at the property. The lawsuit alleged the landlord knew the elevators were a problem for approximately four years, but failed to replace the elevators. As a result, the tenant was required to walk up nine flights of steps which aggravated his knees and asthma. He believed this was discrimination in violation of fair housing laws.

The court dismissed the complaint because the tenant failed to allege he was disabled as defined by fair housing laws and that he had requested the accommodation of the elevators being replaced. The tenant will now get another chance to file a new complaint correcting his errors.

Caution: Relying on cases like this may be dangerous. Before cases are filed in court, landlords typically first undergo a HUD investigation. During the investigation, HUD will question a landlord's employees as to what type of information he/she knows about the resident and what conversations took place. If the tenant is obviously disabled, he/she may not be required to provide information about a disability. If the need for an accommodation is obvious, he/she may not need to provide information about the need for the accommodation, or even put the request in writing. In the New York case, the tenant was acting without an attorney. If HUD finds proof of discrimination, a federal attorney will be assigned to the case.

## N.H. Landlord Settles ESA Case for \$8,500

A New Hampshire landlord has settled a lawsuit alleging discrimination in violation of the Fair Housing Act. The lawsuit alleged the landlord denied a resident's request for an emotional support animal and filed eviction proceedings against the resident even though she provided documentation that the dog was an emotional support animal. The landlord's response was that "regardless of any letter, there are no dogs allowed." After filing a fair housing complaint and lawsuit, the landlord made the decision to pay \$8,500 to settle the case and attend fair housing training.

## New TN Law

A new Tennessee law requires landlords to provide certain information to tenants when signing a leasing agreement. The new law became effective January 1, 2025.

Under the new law, landlords must provide to the tenant: The name and address of (i) the agent authorized to manage the premises, which may include a third-party management company; and (ii) an owner of the premises or a person or agent authorized to act for and on behalf of the owner for the acceptance of service of process and for receipt of notices and demands; and a telephone number or electronic mail address for maintenance services; or an online portal system designed for landlord-tenant communication. This notice must be provided in writing and before the tenancy begins. As a result, all new TN leases, including lease renewals, will need to include the information. If you use the HUD model lease, you may provide the information on a separate sheet of paper instead of seeking HUD's approval to change the model lease.





# HOUSING CROSSROADS

WHERE FAIR HOUSING AND  
LANDLORD TENANT LAWS INTERSECT

## Housing Crossroads Webinar

### Managing Vehicles on the Property

Wednesday, January 29, 2025  
10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. central

Every resident has a car...or two. Managing all the vehicles and requests for special parking can become a nightmare for property managers. Who gets priority? Are you required to provide a certain number of parking spaces for each unit?

In this webinar, we will discuss the common problems landlords face when dealing with vehicles on the property, which laws apply, and some best practices. Our discussion will include:

- Towing a Vehicle
- Documentation Needed
- Reserving Spots
- Handicapped Parking
- Abandoned Vehicles
- and much, much more

**\$34.99**  
[Register Now](#)

Register now for what is sure to be an enlightening discussion.



Nathan Lybarger  
Law Office of Hall &  
Associates

### Speakers



Angelita Fisher  
Law Office of Angelita E.  
Fisher

## Annual Three-Part Webinar Series



### **Part One** **March 12, 2025** **Fair Housing Fundamentals**

Knowing the basic fundamentals of fair housing laws will assist owners, managers and staff in making better decisions on what law may apply to their residents and what actions may violate fair housing laws. In this webinar, we will discuss the basics of fair housing laws and the process by which residents may make complaints. Our discussion will include: What Law Applies to Your Property; The Protected Classes; Two Types of Discrimination; Two Types of Harassment; The Complaint Process; and Retaliation.

[Register for Part One](#)  
[Only - \\$24.99](#)



### **Part Two** **March 19, 2025** **Common Fair Housing Issues**

Certain issues in fair housing arise time and again. It is important for managers and staff to know the answers before they face these common issues. In this webinar, we will discuss the current status of the law on common fair housing issues. Our discussion will include common issues for the protected classes of: Familial Status; Sex / Gender; Race / National Origin; and Religion.

[Register for Part Two](#)  
[Only - \\$24.99](#)



### **Part Three** **March 26, 2025** **Accommodations and Modifications**

Residents who are disabled file more fair housing complaints than all other protected classes combined. Why? Maybe because the accommodation process is easy to mess up. In this webinar, we will talk about a landlord's requirement to reasonably accommodate as well as some of the most common accommodation requests. Our discussion will include: Understanding the Difference between an Accommodation and Modification; Paying for the Accommodation/Modification; Getting the Paperwork Right; and Common Accommodations.

[Register for Part Three](#)  
[Only - \\$24.99](#)



[Register for All Three Webinars](#)  
**\$ 64.99**

## DOJ Sues KY Landlord for Sexual Harassment

The U.S. Justice Department has filed a lawsuit against a Kentucky landlord. The DOJ alleges the landlord violated the Fair Housing Act by engaging in sexual harassment and retaliation against female residents.

The lawsuit claims the landlord: (1) offered housing-related benefits in exchange for sexual contact; (2) made unwelcome sexual comments and advances to female tenants; (3) subjected female tenants to unwelcome touching and groping; (4) took adverse housing-related actions against female tenants who refused his sexual advances; and (5) failed to act when made aware of similar harassing behavior by one or more of his employees.

The DOJ seeks monetary damages to compensate persons harmed by the alleged harassment, a civil penalty against the landlord to vindicate the public interest and a court order barring future discrimination.



## Fair Housing Webinar

### Managing Animals on the Property

Wednesday, January 15, 2025  
10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Central



It is a Zoo out there: Pet Spiders, Service Horses, Emotional Support Snakes, and Therapy Pigs! What is a Property Manager to do? What rules apply?

In this webinar, we will discuss the difference between pets, service animals and emotional support animals. We will review policies that a landlord may apply to pets and which he/she may apply to support animals and what documentation a landlord is entitled to. We will discuss:

- Understanding the Difference
- On-Line Health Care Letters
- Aggressive Animals
- Damages and Deposits
- Policies and Restrictions
- Plus, Much, Much, More

**\$24.99**  
[Register Now](#)