

HUMAN RIGHTS TIMELINE

- 1883 Head tax imposed on by Canada immigrants from China.
- 1888 The practice of aboriginal spiritual ceremonies made illegal.
- 1850s Residential schools for Aboriginal children were established by federal law.
- 1929 The Supreme Court of Canada decided that women were not “persons” under the British North America act. The Canadian government appealed this decision to the British Privy Council and this Council overturned the Supreme Court’s decision.
- 1933 Canada accepted fewer Jewish refugees than any other Western Country. We accepted only 5,000.
- 1940 The first race discrimination case to reach the Supreme Court of Canada in Christie v. York Corporation.
- 1947 Saskatchewan became the first province to enact a Bill of Rights. The Bill provided protection from discrimination on the grounds of race, religion, colour and national origin.
- 1947** Canadian women who marry non-Canadian men no longer lose their citizenship.

- 1950s Most Canadian provinces enact legislation prohibiting racial and religious discrimination in employment and /or housing.
- 1953 Canadian immigration laws include an assessment factor of “climatic unsuitability” which effectively denies entry to Canada of black, Chinese and East Indian people. It also excludes homosexuals.
- 1955 Women from Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago and other Caribbean countries are recruited as domestics and received immigrant status.
- 1960 Aboriginal people living on reserves are given the right to vote in federal elections without having to give up their rights as status Indians.
- 1960 The Canadian Bill of Rights is passed.
- 1962 Ontario enacts Canada’s first comprehensive provincial human rights code and establishes the country’s first human rights commission.
- 1965 The last Black segregation school in Canada (Ontario) was closed.
- 1967 Race formally withdrawn as a criterion for admission to Canada in immigration legislation.

- 1969 The Criminal Code is amended to legalize sexual acts between two consenting members of the same sex. Trudeau says that the state has no place in the bedrooms of citizens.
- 1970's The Canadian Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from its list of mental disorders
- 1970 Jeannette Vivian Corbiere Lavell began a 15 year struggle to change the Indian Act to restore status and band membership rights to Aboriginal women who had lost those rights through marriage to non-Aboriginal men; the Indian Act was finally amended in 1985.
- 1971 The federal government unveils its Multiculturalism Policy, a commitment that every policy decision of government, including external affairs, immigration and citizenship, takes into account the cultural diversity of Canada.
- 1972 Before this date, persons with disabilities in Alberta were routinely sterilized.
- 1976 New Brunswick becomes the first province to offer protection from discrimination in employment for the physically disabled.
- 1977 Parliament adopts the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, which prohibits discrimination in employment.
- 1977 Québec includes sexual orientation in its human rights legislation.

- 1978 Immigration legislation amended to remove homosexuality from inadmissible classes.
- 1982 An in-depth survey conducted by Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada found that 80% of all corporate head-hunters and all job agency recruiters in Canada had received requests from employers to discriminate against applicants on the basis of race
- 1982 The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is enacted. Section 15 allows Canadians to enforce their equality rights by means of the Supreme Court.
- 1983 The federal government introduces the Federal Affirmative Action Program which focuses on increasing the representation of women, Aboriginal Persons and persons with disabilities in the federal public sector.
- 1984 Report released on the Royal Commission on Equality in Employment (Abella report) that introduces the term "employment equity" and identifies four designated groups that require programs to overcome historically rooted systemic discrimination.
- 1985 Visible minorities are added to the groups covered by the federal government's Affirmative Action Program.
- 1985 Aboriginal women no longer lose their status of Registered Indian when they marry a non- Aboriginal. However these rights are not extended to their children.

- 1986 Up until this year, the *Indian Act* stipulates that an Aboriginal woman who marries a non-Aboriginal loses her Aboriginal status while an Aboriginal man who marries a non-Aboriginal maintains his status.
- 1986 The federal Employment Equity Act is passed. This Act does not apply to the federal public service.
- 1987 The Supreme Court of Canada orders CN Rail to hire more women in blue-collar jobs.
- 1987 The Supreme Court of Canada rules that employers have a duty to provide a harassment free environment.
- 1988 The Canadian government makes redress payments to Japanese Canadians as compensation for their loss of property, status and internment during World War II.
- 1991 The Canadian Civil Liberties Association conducts a survey of fifteen employment agencies in Toronto, Ottawa, London and Kitchener-Waterloo. Twelve of these agencies indicate they would be willing to refer "white only" candidates if asked to do so.

- 1992 The Supreme Court of Canada rules in the *Renaud* case that both the employer and the union have a duty to make reasonable accommodation to the point of undue hardship.
- 1992 Following the Ontario Court of Appeal ruling in *Birch and Haig*, the Canadian Human Rights Commission begins accepting discrimination complaints on the ground of sexual orientation.
- 1992 The Federal Court lifts the ban on homosexuals in the military.
- 1992 THE ARCHITECTURAL ACCESSIBILITY OF POLLING STATIONS BECAME MANDATORY.
- 1993 Canadian Refugee Guidelines are modified to cover women who are persecuted because of their gender.
- 1993 The *Ontario Employment Equity Act* receives Royal Assent.
- 1995 The Ontario Employment Equity Act is repealed by the Conservative government.
- 1995 Parliament adopts a revised federal Employment Equity Act, which applies to the federal Public Service.
- 1995 The Canadian Government recognizes the inherent right to self-government of Aboriginal Peoples.

- 1995 The federal government signs a Memorandum of Understanding with the Stoney Point First nation to return land which was expropriated. This took place after the Ipperwash stand-off where an unarmed Aboriginal protester is shot and killed.
- 1997 The Supreme Court rules for the first time that there is a duty to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities.
- 1997 In *National Capital Alliance on Race Relations vs. Health Canada*, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal orders a series of permanent and temporary measures to eliminate discriminatory employment barriers against visible minorities and to redress the effects of past discrimination.
- 1999 The Supreme Court of Canada rules, in the Egan and Nesbit case, that government cannot limit benefits or obligations by discriminating against same-sex common-law relationships.
- 1999 In *Meiorin vs. the BC Government*, the Supreme Court of Canada rules that employers have a positive obligation to ensure that workplace standards and requirements do not discriminate.
- 2000 The Federal Government introduces a legislative amendment to define marriage as restricted to opposite-sex couples only.
- 2000 A 20% hiring goal is instituted in the federal public service for one of the equity groups, becoming the first such voluntary measure by an employer.

- 2001 The Nova Scotia provincial government institutes a registry of domestic relationships which allows opposite sex and same sex relationships to be registered.
- 2001 Ontario introduces the Ontarians with Disabilities Act.
- 2002 CBC Television and Newsworld required to caption every second of their broadcast days, save for outside commercials, in a human rights settlement.
- 2005 Canada became the fourth country in the world to legalize same-sex marriage nationwide with the enactment of the [Civil Marriage Act](#).
- 2008 The Prime Minister issues an apology for the abuses of Aboriginal Peoples in Canadian residential schools.
- 2009 Sharon McIver wins her battle to force changes to the Indian Act so that grandchildren of Aboriginal women who marry non-Aboriginal may be granted Indian Status.