

INDIANA LAW

Indiana, unlike 45 other states, does not have a hate crimes law. However, there are currently a few statutory provisions that may apply to some hate incidents or crimes.

Under Indiana law, it is illegal to intentionally or recklessly damage a religious structure (such as painting swastikas on a synagogue), to deface a cemetery or to damage a school facility (such as spray painting "whitey" on a classroom door).

The parent of a child under 18 may be liable for up to \$5,000 of the damage the child inflicts upon a person or property during a hate crime or other criminal offense. If the child is involved in a criminal gang, and the parent failed to take reasonable steps to prevent such involvement, the parent may be liable for full damages.

A person who conveys an annoying or alarming message to another person by phone, electronic mail or postal mail may be guilty of illegal harassment.

Bloomington Human Rights Commission

For more information about hate incidents, or for copies of our reports, contact us at

401 N. Morton Street
Suite 220

Bloomington, Indiana 47404

Phone: 812.349.3429

Fax: 812.349.3441

Human.rights@bloomington.in.gov



Hate Incidents: A Threat to Our Community



The Bloomington Human Rights Ordinance promotes equal opportunity in employment, education, housing and access to public accommodations, regardless of race, sex, religion, color, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, gender identity, disability, veteran status or housing status. The ordinance also prohibits familial status discrimination in housing. Every person who lives or works in Bloomington is entitled to certain rights, and has certain responsibilities, pursuant to the Human Rights Ordinance.

*The Bloomington
Human Rights Ordinance*

WHAT ARE HATE INCIDENTS?

The Bloomington Human Rights Ordinance defines hate incidents as “verbal or physical abuse directed at individuals or groups because of their race, sex, color, disability, age, sexual orientation, ancestry, religion, gender identity, national origin, veteran status or housing status.” Hate incidents come in many forms, including assaults, threats, verbal harassment and vandalism.



WHY SHOULD WE BE CONCERNED ABOUT HATE INCIDENTS?

Hate incidents are a problem for the community, not just the individual. Perpetrators of hate incidents perceive a lack of police, media and public response as encouragement to commit additional acts.

People frequently suffer both emotional and physical reactions after experiencing bias or surviving a crime. Victims of hate incidents may begin to feel ashamed of who they are. They may become afraid to walk in certain neighborhoods — even their own — because of previous incidents. They may even be afraid to stay in their own homes. Such incidents poison our community.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

If you are a victim: When appropriate, do what you can to defuse the situation. If it feels safe, try to start a conversation with the offender. Or walk away, as hard as that may be to do. After the incident, write down a description of the offender and any other identifying information. Get names and addresses of any witnesses. Keep all documentation. Then

Report the violation: Reporting hate incidents is important. You may file a report with the police, or, if you prefer to remain anonymous, you may call the Bloomington Human Rights Commission, 812-349-3429. Or send us an email, at human.rights@bloomington.in.gov. Or report on-line at bloomington.in.gov/report-a-hate-incident. We serve as a listening line, make appropriate referrals and publish annual reports about hate incidents in our community.

The City of Bloomington takes hate incidents seriously. You do not have to remain a passive victim. Offenders may be arrested and prosecuted. In some cases, the victim may secure a protective order to help prevent the offender from contacting the victim again.

EXAMPLES OF REPORTED HATE INCIDENTS IN BLOOMINGTON

- A Korean man walking to church is murdered by a white supremacist.
- A rock is thrown through a window displaying a rainbow (gay pride) flag.
- A black family moves into a predominantly white neighborhood. A neighbor circulates a petition to “get the nigger out.”
- A man with a Middle Eastern-sounding last name reported receiving an anonymous call at 4:20 a.m. The caller said, “You Taliban son of a bitch. I’ll come cut your throat.”
- Swastikas and religious slurs are painted on a Jewish fraternity.
- “KKK” is spray-painted on the B-Line Trail.
- The mother of a son with a developmental disability reports that someone had carved the words “retard” and “white trash” on her car door.

**DON'T
TOLERATE
HATE
CRIME
TELL
SOMEONE**