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Workplace Discrimination for Security Officers: FEHA and Title VII Basics

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California's Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA) and the federal Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibit employers, including private patrol operators, from making job decisions based on protected traits like race, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, or veteran status.

What the laws cover

FEHA applies to California employers with five or more employees and covers hiring, discipline, scheduling, promotion, and termination decisions.

Title VII applies to employers with 15 or more employees nationwide and is enforced by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

A security guard assigned fewer post hours, denied a promotion, or terminated because of a protected trait may have a claim under one or both laws.

Protected classes compared

Category	Covered by FEHA	Covered by Title VII
Race, color, national origin	Yes	Yes
Sex, pregnancy, gender identity	Yes	Yes
Religion	Yes	Yes
Age (40+)	Yes	Yes (ADEA)
Disability	Yes	Yes (ADA)
Marital status, ancestry	Yes	No

How claims are typically evaluated

- Was the officer part of a protected class?
- Did they suffer an adverse action (demotion, termination, denied post)?
- Is there evidence the trait, not performance, motivated the decision?

- Did similarly situated coworkers outside the class receive different treatment?

Research and education only

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If you believe you have experienced discrimination, consult a licensed California attorney or contact the California Civil Rights Department or the EEOC directly about your specific situation.

Quick answers

Does FEHA apply to small guard companies?

FEHA generally covers employers with five or more employees, which includes most licensed private patrol operators.

Can I file with both CRD and EEOC?

Both agencies have work-sharing agreements, and filing with one typically preserves your rights under the other, but deadlines still apply.

What if the discrimination came from a client, not my employer?

Employers can still be responsible for failing to address discrimination by a client's staff on a post site.

Is there a time limit to file?

Yes, both CRD and EEOC impose strict filing deadlines, so prompt action is important.

Primary sources — read the official text

Fair Employment and Housing Act overview	California Civil Rights Department	https://calcivilrights.ca.gov/employment/
Title VII of the Civil Rights Act	U.S. EEOC	https://www.eeoc.gov/statutes/title-vii-civil-rights-act-1964
File a complaint	California Civil Rights Department	https://calcivilrights.ca.gov/complaintprocess/
Age Discrimination in Employment Act	U.S. EEOC	https://www.eeoc.gov/statutes/age-discrimination-employment-act-1967
California Government Code § 12940	California Legislative Information	https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=12940.&lawCode=GOV

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