

Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission Settlement Agreement

About Settlement Agreements

Many human rights complaints are settled (closed through an agreement between the parties). When cases settle, there is no decision on whether discrimination happened because only a Board of Inquiry (i.e., public hearing) can do that. Cases settle for many reasons (speed, control over the process, confidentiality, etc.), and each agreement is unique. Settlements do not create “precedent”, meaning they do not influence future Board of Inquiry decisions.

This is an example of a matter that was settled by the parties. The agreement is confidential and therefore any identifying information has been removed or altered.

Area: Access to Services or Facilities

Characteristic: Aboriginal Origin

Allegation: The Complainant is an Aboriginal woman. She attempted to purchase some technological items for her children at a store. Her status entitles her to a tax exemption if items are delivered to her address on-reserve. She explained this to the clerk. The clerk told her that the store’s head office issued a directive not allowing tax exemptions to Aboriginals because “they abuse the system”. When she asked for clarification, she was told that the store “does not agree with Indians getting things tax free.” She contacted the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission. With the support of the Commission, the parties reached an agreement to resolve the concerns. This agreement includes the following terms:

Individual Terms

- Letter of apology

Public Interest Terms

- Policy amendment to reflect Canadian law (allowing such exemptions)