



## *Fair Play at Work*

**E**mployment equity means fairness in the workplace. Canadians agree that no one should face employment barriers simply by virtue of being a woman, a person with a disability, an Aboriginal person, or a member of a visible minority. Yet, the reality is that qualified individuals from these groups have traditionally been hired, employed, and promoted at rates well below their availability in the labour market. Federal employment equity legislation aims at ensuring that members of these four “designated groups” are treated equitably.

The Employment Equity Act (1995) updates federal legislation that had been in effect since 1986. The Act applies to the federal public service, federal Crown corporations and federally-regulated firms employing 100 or more people. These include the post office, airlines, railroads, interprovincial bus and trucking companies, banks and telephone and broadcasting companies.


Under the Act, each employer is required to:

- provide its employees with a questionnaire which allows them to indicate whether they belong to one of the four designated groups;
- identify jobs in which the percentage of designated group members falls below their availability in the labour market;
- communicate information on employment equity to its employees, and consult and collaborate with employee representatives;
- identify possible barriers in existing employment systems which may be limiting the employment opportunity of designated group members;
- develop an employment equity plan aimed at promoting a fully equitable workplace (this plan must include positive policies and practices, measures to remove employment barriers, timetables and goals, and must be sufficient to achieve reasonable progress towards a representative workplace);



- make all reasonable efforts to implement its plan;
- monitor, review, and revise its plan from time to time; and
- prepare an annual report on its employment equity data and activities.

The Canadian Human Rights Commission has the responsibility for auditing employers' compliance with the Act. If the audit shows that one or more requirements has not been met, the Commission and the employer will work together to negotiate a solution to the problem. Under certain circumstances, the Commission may issue directions requiring employers to take measures to improve representation. If directions are issued, employers will have the right to appeal them to a Tribunal.

The new Employment Equity Act came into force on October 24, 1996. Formal audits under the Act began a year later. 

If you would like further information about the Commission's work to promote employment equity, visit our Internet site at [www.chrc-ccdp.ca](http://www.chrc-ccdp.ca), or contact us at:

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