

Older people, let no one deny you your rights!

If you, or someone you know, suffers any form of abuse, get help! Claim your rights as an older person! Our Constitution **protects** you. The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) is equipped to **help** you. There are also many other individuals and service providers that can help:

- Help Elder Abuse Line (HEAL), telephone toll-free 0800 00 30 81
- Magistrate's Courts/Equality Courts
- Police stations
- A neighbour, religious leader or traditional leader.

If your rights as an older person are being violated — or if you want to help someone who is being abused, neglected or exploited — then contact us at one of the following SAHRC offices:

Contact us

Gauteng (Head Office)

29 Princess of Wales Terrace
Corner of York and St. Andrews Streets,
Parktown, JOHANNESBURG

☎ (011) 484 8300

Fax (011) 484 7149

Eastern Cape

Suite 22, 7th Floor, Allied Building
Govan Mbeki Avenue, PORT ELIZABETH

☎ (041) 582 2611/4094

Fax (041) 582 2204

Free State

1st Floor, NBS Building, 2 Elizabeth Street,
BLOEMFONTEIN

☎ (051) 447 1130

Fax (051) 447 1128

KwaZulu-Natal

First Floor, 136 Victoria Embankment
DURBAN

☎/Fax (031) 304 7323/4/5

Limpopo

1st Floor, Office 102, Library Garden Square,
Corner of Schoeman and Grobler Streets,
POLOKWANE

☎ (015) 291 3500

Fax (015) 291 3505

Northern Cape

45 Mark and Scott Road,
Ancorley Building, UPINGTON

☎ (054) 332 3993/4

Fax (054) 332 7750

Western Cape

7th floor, ABSA Building, 132 Adderley Street,
CAPE TOWN

☎ (021) 426 2277

Fax (021) 426 2875

Website: www.sahrc.org.za

E-mail: sahrcinfo@sahrc.org.za



Older people, you have rights!





Older people, did you know that you and I — and millions of others aged 60 and over — constitute a very important group of South Africans?

There are over 3,2 million of us older people. We live in a country that is guided by a Constitution, and that Constitution recognises **human rights** — including our rights.

Are your rights being denied?

Our Constitution recognises our rights — but our families, friends, businesses and public service providers do not always do so!

Many older persons are neglected, abused, hurt, insulted, confined and exploited. Some live in happier circumstances but are still denied certain rights — like the right of access to adequate health care, the right of access to information, and the right of access to ongoing education.



Older persons' rights are human rights. Anyone who denies you your rights is breaking the law.

Let's stand up for our rights! Help yourselves by knowing what your rights are, and where to go for help if your rights are violated.



What are my rights?

The United Nations Principles on Older Persons (1991) states that older people need care, dignity, independence, self-fulfilment and the opportunity to participate in family and community life.



Chapter 2 of our Constitution contains the **Bill of Rights**, which applies to everyone. Some of the more important rights for older persons are:

- Equality
- Human dignity
- Access to information
- Access to adequate housing
- Access to sufficient food and water
- Access to health care services
- Access to social security (old age pension)
- Access to adult education.

Let's take a look at some of these rights, and how they may affect you.

The right of access to social security

Women over 60 and men over 65 who are South African citizens, qualify for an old-age pension if they do not receive any other grant and have an income less than a certain amount.

To apply for your old-age pension, go to the nearest Welfare Offices. If you are unable to go, a friend or family member may apply for you. Married, divorced or widowed applicants must take along their marriage certificate, divorce certificate or the death certificate of their spouse. All applicants must take along their bar-coded ID (identity) book.

If your application is refused, the reasons must be given to you in writing. You can appeal (challenge) this decision by contacting your Provincial Minister of Social Development within 90 days of the refusal.

You have the right to equality

The Constitution protects your right to be treated equally. No one may discriminate against you because of your age. The Equality Act of 2000 has provided for the establishment of Equality Courts. If anyone discriminates against you on any grounds, including your age, the Equality Court can assist you with your complaint.

You have the right to dignity and bodily integrity

Our Constitution states that all people have the right to dignity. This means that no one may abuse, exploit or hurt you, either physically or mentally.