Equal Opportunity Commission
Promoting Equality

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Divali: Celebrating the Light of Unity, Respect and Equality



On November 8, 2026, Hindus across Trinidad and Tobago and around the world will celebrate Divali, the Festival of Lights. Homes and communities will be illuminated with deyas, colourful decorations will brighten neighbourhoods, and families will come together in prayer, reflection and celebration. Beyond its religious significance, Divali offers an important message that resonates with all of us: light can overcome darkness, and unity can overcome division.

For many Hindus, Divali represents the triumph of good over evil, light over darkness and knowledge over ignorance. It is a time for spiritual renewal, gratitude and reflection. The lighting of deyas is a beautiful symbol of hope, reminding us that even a small light can make a difference in the darkness.

These values also speak to the work of the Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC), which is committed to promoting equality of opportunity, eliminating discrimination and fostering good relations among people of different backgrounds. Just as Divali encourages the spreading of light, the EOC works to promote understanding, challenge prejudice and create a society where every individual is treated with dignity and respect. Trinidad and Tobago is a country enriched by its many cultures, religions, traditions and communities. Our diversity is one of our greatest strengths. Throughout the year, we share in celebrations such as Divali, Eid-ul-Fitr, Christmas, Emancipation Day and other important cultural and religious observances. These occasions provide opportunities to learn about one another, appreciate our differences and recognise the values that connect us.



Importantly, unity does not mean that we must all share the same beliefs, customs or traditions. Rather, it means respecting one another despite our differences. It means recognising that everyone has the right to practise their religion, celebrate their culture and participate fully in society without fear of discrimination or exclusion.

This is where equality becomes especially important. A truly inclusive society is one in which people are not judged, disadvantaged or treated unfairly because of their religious beliefs, ethnicity, race, origin or other protected status grounds under the Equal Opportunity Act. Respect must extend beyond words and be reflected in our workplaces, schools, communities and everyday interactions.

Putting Equality into Practice

As we celebrate Divali, the EOC

encourages everyone to turn the festival's message into meaningful action. Make an effort to learn about cultures and traditions different from your own. Challenge discriminatory remarks and behaviours rather than allowing prejudice to go unquestioned. Treat colleagues, neighbours and fellow citizens with fairness, regardless of their backgrounds or beliefs. Most importantly, if you believe you have experienced discrimination on a ground covered by the Equal Opportunity Act, take the time to learn about your rights and contact the EOC for information and guidance. You can also visit equalopportunity.gov.tt to learn more about the Commission and access its online complaints form.

Building a harmonious society is a shared responsibility. It begins with simple actions: showing kindness, listening without prejudice, respecting different perspectives and standing against discrimination whenever we encounter it. These actions may seem small, but together they can help create meaningful change.

Let the light of every deya remind us that a brighter Trinidad and Tobago is possible when equality, understanding and respect guide our actions. May we continue to celebrate our differences, protect one another's dignity and work together towards a society where everyone has an equal opportunity to thrive.

Shubh Divali

From the Commissioners, Management and Staff of the Equal Opportunity Commission.

Visit **www.equalopportunity.gov.tt,**
email us at **communications@eoc.gov.tt**,
or call **1-868-672-0928** to book a **FREE WORKSHOP** for your organisation, report discrimination or victimisation, or get support. You can also follow us on social media

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