

UPS driver sues over dreads

Nieland Bynoe was hired as a driver for UPS Freight in Harrisburg in 2007. He hadn't even made it through orientation, however, before he was fired for refusing to shave his beard and cut off his dreadlocks.

Bynoe had asked UPS to grant a religious accommodation for his dreads and beard, saying that his Rastafarian religious beliefs prohibited cutting them. When the company fired him instead, the EEOC sued on his behalf.

Dreadlocks and beards are a protected religious observance rights under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, and were explicitly recognized in the EEOC's July 2008 revisions to the act. In fact, the EEOC guidance is so cut and dried, it's hard to see how UPS will be able to avoid an expensive settlement or judgment.