

EEOC flexes muscle with 5 harassment suits

The EEOC wants to make it clear: Regardless of which way the political winds blow, it still takes workplace harassment seriously. Reconvening its Select Task Force on Sexual Harassment is only one part of the anti-harassment push.

The EEOC has also filed lawsuits against five different employers in a single week, accusing them of various types of harassment.

- 1.** Gulf Coast shipbuilder Master Marine faces charges of race and same-sex harassment after it allegedly failed to address complaints filed by a welder of Asian ancestry. A supervisor is accused of making racist comments and unwanted sexual advances to the welder. The supervisor is also accused of using racial epithets against three black employees.
- 2.** The EEOC alleges that Real Time Staffing Services in New Mexico turned a deaf ear to women it assigned to work at the Albuquerque Police Department. Police supervisors allegedly called the women “prostitutes” and “sluts” while subjecting them to unwanted touching.
- 3.** In Dallas, a lawsuit alleges a supervisor for Screen Tight, regularly followed a female custodian into restrooms as she cleaned them and tried to force himself on her. The suit alleges a company vice-president subjected the woman to verbal abuse.
- 4.** A California Tapioca Express franchise owner faces charges he touched and made suggestive comments to female employees.
- 5.** The EEOC also sued a Ohio construction clean-up firm, alleging a supervisor touched, harassed, and stalked a female employee.

These suits mark a recent uptick in legal action by the EEOC. The commission is clearly sensitive to the publicity the #MeToo and #TimesUp movements have generated and plans to be aggressive in litigating harassment complaints.

Advice: Investigate every harassment allegation promptly. If you don't, harassed employees will clearly find a sympathetic ear at the EEOC.