



**U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission**

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**Press Release**

09-06-2023

# **Balfour Beatty Sued by EEOC Over Sex Harassment at Construction Worksite**

Female Truck Driver Suffered Long-Term Harassment, but Management Ignored Her Complaints, Federal Agency Alleges

RALEIGH, N.C. – Balfour Beatty Infrastructure, Inc., a highway construction company incorporated in Delaware and doing business in Craven County, North Carolina, violated federal law when it subjected a female truck driver to severe and pervasive sexual harassment, a hostile environment based on sex, and retaliation, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) charged in a lawsuit filed today.

The EEOC suit alleges that, for over a year, the victim was subjected to harassment by several male coworkers. One coworker asked the victim to “talk dirty” to him, send pictures of her breasts, and sit on his lap. He also sent her sexually explicit text messages.

When the victim reported the conduct to the foreman, he laughed at her, the EEOC said. The behavior was allowed to continue, and the coworker’s conduct escalated as he began sending the victim photos of his penis. The victim also experienced hostile and abusive harassment by several male coworkers because she was female. The male coworkers called the victim sexually derogatory names on a regular basis,

told her to “shut the f\*\*\* up you stupid b\*\*\*\*”, and told her “This is a man’s world . . . if you can’t handle it then go work for Walmart.” After the victim complained to a superintendent, she was denied an opportunity for advancement she was expecting, the EEOC charged. Instead, she was transferred to an undesirable work location while the offending coworkers, and the foreman who failed to stop the abuse, were transferred to the more desirable project.

Such alleged conduct violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which protects individuals from workplace discrimination and harassment. The EEOC filed suit in U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of North Carolina, Eastern Division (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission v. Balfour Beatty Infrastructure, Inc, Civil Action No.: 4:23-CV-00144-FL) after first attempting to reach a pre-litigation settlement through its voluntary conciliation process.

The EEOC seeks monetary relief for the victim, including back pay, and compensatory and punitive damages. The EEOC also seeks injunctive relief against the company to end any ongoing discrimination and to prevent such unlawful conduct in the future.

“Some of the most egregious incidents of harassment and discrimination investigated by the EEOC over the past several years have occurred in the construction industry,” said EEOC Chair Charlotte A. Burrows. “The prevalence and severity of abuse directed at women in the construction industry is a significant barrier to their ability to get and keep good jobs in construction and further their careers in the industry. The EEOC is committed to advancing equal opportunity in construction by using all its tools, including outreach, education, technical assistance and, where necessary, litigation.”

In May 2023, Chair Burrows issued a report entitled “**[Building for the Future: Advancing Equal Employment Opportunity in the Construction Industry](https://www.eeoc.gov/building-future-advancing-equal-employment-opportunity-construction-industry)** (**<https://www.eeoc.gov/building-future-advancing-equal-employment-opportunity-construction-industry>**.)” The report found that persistent discrimination, including harassment, in construction creates barriers to building a more inclusive industry at a time when the unprecedented federal investment in infrastructure is spurring new hiring and expanding opportunities. The report offers strategies for more effectively advancing equal employment opportunity in construction.

“Employers in the construction industry must be vigilant in their efforts to protect

women from sexual abuse and discrimination in the workplace,” said Melinda C. Dugas, regional attorney for the EEOC’s Charlotte District. “When discrimination policies and reporting procedures are illusory because no one is enforcing them, they only serve to undermine the employer’s legitimate efforts to comply with the law.”

For more information on retaliation, please visit [\*\*https://www.eeoc.gov/retaliation\*\*](https://www.eeoc.gov/retaliation) ([\*\*https://www.eeoc.gov/retaliation\*\*](https://www.eeoc.gov/retaliation)). For more information on sex-based discrimination, please visit [\*\*https://www.eeoc.gov/sex-based-discrimination\*\*](https://www.eeoc.gov/sex-based-discrimination) ([\*\*https://www.eeoc.gov/sex-based-discrimination\*\*](https://www.eeoc.gov/sex-based-discrimination)). For more information on sexual harassment, please visit [\*\*https://www.eeoc.gov/sexual-harassment\*\*](https://www.eeoc.gov/sexual-harassment) ([\*\*https://www.eeoc.gov/sexual-harassment\*\*](https://www.eeoc.gov/sexual-harassment)).

The EEOC’s Charlotte District is charged with enforcing federal employment anti-discrimination laws in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia.

The EEOC advances opportunity in the workplace by enforcing federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination. More information is available at [\*\*www.eeoc.gov\*\*](http://www.eeoc.gov) ([\*\*http://www.eeoc.gov/\*\*](http://www.eeoc.gov/)). Stay connected with the latest EEOC news by subscribing to our [\*\*email updates\*\*](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USEEOC/subscriber/new) ([\*\*https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USEEOC/subscriber/new\*\*](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USEEOC/subscriber/new)).