



U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Press Release

01-10-2024

EEOC Sues Bob's Tire Company, Inc. for Sexual, Racial, and National Origin Harassment and Retaliation

Owner of Scrap Tire Company Created a Hostile Work Environment for Male and Hispanic Employees and Retaliated Against Employee Who Complained of Sexual Harassment, Federal Agency Charges

BOSTON - Bob's Tire Company, Inc., a used tire scrap and recycling facility in New Bedford, Massachusetts, violated federal law by subjecting male and Hispanic employees — nearly all of Guatemalan descent — to sexual, racial, and/or national origin harassment, and retaliated against one employee who complained about sexual harassment, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) charged in a lawsuit it announced today.

According to the EEOC's lawsuit, the owner of Bob's Tire, Robert "Bob" Bates, subjected employees to egregious and constant harassment. This harassment included Bates telling Hispanic employees to "go back to [their] country"; calling Guatemalan employees "f---ing Guatemalans"; donning a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement hat to intimidate Hispanic employees; and calling employees homophobic slurs.

Additionally, employees were also harassed by a co-worker because of their sex, race, and national origin, and at least one employee complained to the owner of Bob's Tire about this co-worker's sexual harassment. Instead of taking remedial actions, Bates retaliated against this complaining employee by mocking him for being in a romantic and/or sexual relationship with the harassing co-worker, effectively condoning the illegal harassment in the workplace.

The alleged conduct violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of sex, race and national origin, and prohibits retaliation against employees who object to such discrimination. The EEOC filed suit in U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts (Civil Action No. 1:24-cv-10077) after first attempting to reach a pre-litigation settlement through its conciliation process. The EEOC's suit seeks monetary relief for the employees harmed by these illegal practices as well as injunctive relief to prevent Bob's Tire from engaging in further sexual, racial, and national origin harassment and retaliation.

"Employees should not have to endure hostile or intimidating workplaces because of their sex, race, or national origin to earn a basic living," said Jeffrey Burstein, regional attorney for the EEOC's New York District Office. "Effective harassment prevention must start at the highest levels of management, as found by the **EEOC's Select Task Force on the Study of Harassment in the Workplace** (<https://www.eeoc.gov/select-task-force-study-harassment-workplace>). The EEOC will continue to take action to ensure that all employees are protected and that employers abide by federal anti-discrimination laws."

Yaw Gyebi, Jr., the director of the New York District, said, "Employees' complaints of illegal harassment should be addressed promptly and effectively by employers, not met with retaliatory harassment. The EEOC remains committed to defending those employees who bravely speak up about discriminatory workplaces."

This case will be litigated by EEOC trial attorney Katie N. Linehan and supervised by assistant regional attorney Kimberly A. Cruz.

For more information about the EEOC's work to eradicate harassment in the workplace, please visit **What You Should Know: EEOC Leads the Way in Preventing Workplace Harassment** (<https://www.eeoc.gov/wysk/what-you-should-know-eeoc-leads-way-preventing-workplace-harassment>). The EEOC has also issued technical assistance on **Immigrants' Employment Rights under**

Federal Anti-Discrimination Laws (<https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/fact-sheet-immigrants-employment-rights-under-federal-anti-discrimination-laws>)

. Please also visit the EEOC's website for more information about **harassment** (<https://www.eeoc.gov/harassment>) and **retaliation** (<https://www.eeoc.gov/retaliation>).

The EEOC's New York District Office is responsible for enforcing federal employment discrimination laws in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, northern New Jersey, Rhode Island and Vermont.

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>). Stay connected with the latest EEOC news by subscribing to our **email updates** (<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USEEOC/subscriber/new>).

Recent Press Releases from the Boston Area Office

Cloudbeds to Pay \$150,000 to Resolve EEOC Disability Discrimination Lawsuit (<https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/cloudbeds-pay-150000-resolve-eeoc-disability-discrimination-lawsuit>)

EEOC Sues Cloudbeds for Discriminating Against Deaf Applicant (<https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-sues-cloudbeds-discriminating-against-deaf-applicant>)

EEOC Sues LeachGarner for Sex Discrimination (<https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-sues-leachgarner-sex-discrimination>)

Recent Press Releases on the Subject of Harassment, Retaliation

Mueller Co. and IH Services to Pay \$150,000 to Settle EEOC Sexual Harassment and Retaliation Suit (<https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/mueller-co-and-ih-services-pay-150000-settle-eeoc-sexual-harassment-and-retaliation-suit>)

Las Compañías Mueller Co. e IH Services Pagarán \$150,000 Para Resolver la

[Demanda de Acoso Sexual y Represalias de la EEOC \(https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/las-companias-mueller-co-e-ih-services-pagaran-150000-para-resolver-la-demanda-de-acoso\)](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/las-companias-mueller-co-e-ih-services-pagaran-150000-para-resolver-la-demanda-de-acoso)

[EEOC Sues Asphalt Paving Systems for Racial Harassment \(https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-sues-asphalt-paving-systems-racial-harassment\)](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-sues-asphalt-paving-systems-racial-harassment)