



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

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## **Press Release**

09-14-2023

# **Chipotle to Pay \$400,000 to Settle EEOC Sexual Harassment Lawsuit**

Restaurant Settles Federal Charges It Ignored Employees' Reports of Sexual Harassment

SAMMAMISH, Wash. — Chipotle has agreed to pay \$400,000 to three former crew members at its Sammamish, Washington, restaurant location, and will provide other relief to resolve a sexual harassment lawsuit filed by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the federal agency announced today.

According to the EEOC's lawsuit, Chipotle permitted the three young crew members, including one who was only 17 years old at the time, to be harassed by their 29-year old service manager and subsequently by a 24-year old coworker. The harassment included the manager sexually assaulting the underaged employee and touching another worker's buttocks. He also made unwelcome sexual comments and requests for sex, and isolated employees by trapping them in the restaurant's walk-in refrigerator—blocking their exit—and caused them to fear for their safety. Despite the employees' reports to the Sammamish restaurant's general managers of being sexually harassed, Chipotle failed to adequately investigate their complaints and did not take adequate remedial measures to stop the sexual harassment.

Such alleged conduct violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which requires employers to investigate and take steps to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace. The EEOC filed its lawsuit (EEOC v. Chipotle Services, LLC and Chipotle Mexican Grill, Inc., *Case No. 2:22-cv-00279-RSL-MLP*) in U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington at Seattle after first attempting to reach a pre-litigation settlement through its conciliation process.

Under the three-year consent decree settling the suit, Chipotle will pay \$400,000 to the three former employees and will appoint an internal consent decree coordinator to review, revise and implement anti-discriminatory policies and procedures that prohibit sexual harassment and retaliation. Chipotle will provide additional sexual harassment training to its employees, supervisors and managers at seven of its Washington restaurants in Bellevue, Redmond, Issaquah and Sammamish. Chipotle will also provide additional training to its HR investigators on how to conduct sexual discrimination and harassment investigations. Chipotle will also adopt and disseminate policies holding its supervisors and managers accountable for their compliance with its EEO policies and procedures.

“It is not enough for an employer to have a policy against sexual harassment,” said Nancy Sienko, director of the EEOC’s San Francisco District, which includes Washington state. “The employer and its managers must follow through on that policy by thoroughly responding to reports of harassment by either forwarding the report to HR or investigating the harassment complaint and taking effective action to end a hostile work environment.”

EEOC Regional Attorney Roberta Steele said, “New employees entering the workplace for the first time are especially vulnerable to harassment because they frequently do not understand how Title VII protects them from such unlawful conduct. Employers must make sure that their managers and workers understand their rights and responsibilities under Title VII, and take prompt action to stop such conduct when it occurs in the workplace.”

For more information about workplace right and EEOC’s effort to educate young workers, visit **Youth@Work | U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (eeoc.gov) (https://www.eeoc.gov/youthwork)**. For more information on sexual harassment, please visit **https://www.eeoc.gov/sexual-harassment (https://www.eeoc.gov/sexual-harassment)**.

The EEOC’s Seattle Field Office has jurisdiction over Washington, Alaska, Oregon,

Idaho and Montana.

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>). 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).