



U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Press Release

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Mueller Co. and IH Services to Pay \$150,000 to Settle EEOC Sexual Harassment and Retaliation Suit

Settles Federal Charges Alabama Manufacturer and Cleaning Company Permitted Hostile Work Environment for Three Female Employees

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. – Mueller Co. LLC, a nationwide manufacturer and seller of gas and water distribution products, and IH Services, Inc., which provides cleaning services in Mueller facilities, agreed to pay \$150,000 and provide other relief to settle claims of sexual harassment and retaliation in a lawsuit filed by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the federal agency announced today.

According to the lawsuit, IH Services assigned three female janitors to work at Mueller's Albertville, Alabama, fire hydrant manufacturing plant. Several male Mueller employees solicited these female employees for sex, exposed their genitals and made sexual comments about the women's bodies and sex lives. The EEOC further alleged that one Mueller employee attempted to rape one of the female janitors. After they complained to multiple IH Services and Mueller managers, IH Services retaliated against two of them by reducing their hours, making them work overnight shifts, and suspending or terminating them, the EEOC said.

This alleged conduct violated Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits an employer from permitting a hostile work environment based on sex and retaliating against those who complain about Title VII violations. The EEOC filed suit (EEOC v. Mueller Co. LLC and IH Services, Inc., Case No. 4:23-cv-00552-CLM) in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Alabama after its Birmingham District office completed an investigation and first attempted to reach a pre-litigation settlement through its voluntary conciliation process.

Under a three-year consent decree, in addition to monetary relief for the victims, both companies will review and revise their sexual harassment and retaliation policies and post them in prominent locations frequented by employees or distribute them to all employees. Both companies will also provide annual training on their sexual harassment and retaliation policies and employee rights under Title VII to both managers and non-supervisory employees.

“Under Title VII, employers must provide a workplace free from severe or pervasive sexual harassment,” said EEOC Birmingham District Director Bradley Anderson. “Companies like Mueller do not get a free pass when its employees harass individuals who are employed by another company. Likewise, employers like IH Services are liable for sex harassment of their employees even when the harasser is not its employee.”

Marsha Rucker, regional attorney for the EEOC’s Birmingham District, said, “The EEOC is committed to protecting workers from sexual harassment and retaliation for complaining about sexual harassment, even when that harassment takes place at another employer’s worksite. The EEOC will aggressively pursue remedies for victims of sexual harassment in the workplace and those whom employers retaliate against for exercising their rights under Title VII.”

For more information on sexual harassment, please visit [**https://www.eeoc.gov/sexualharassment**](https://www.eeoc.gov/sexualharassment) ([**https://www.eeoc.gov/sexualharassment**](https://www.eeoc.gov/sexualharassment)). 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)).

The EEOC’s Birmingham District consists of Alabama, Mississippi (except 17 northern counties) and the Florida Panhandle.

The EEOC advances opportunity in the workplace by enforcing federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination. More information is available at

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