



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

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**Press Release**

05-02-2023

# **EEOC Sues Mueller Co., LLC and IH Services, Inc. for Sexual Harassment and Retaliation**

Manufacturer and Staffing Agency Ignored Multiple Sexually-Hostile Work Environment Complaints and Retaliated Against Females Who Complained, Federal Agency Charges

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. – Delaware-based Mueller Co., LLC and South Carolina-based IH Services, Inc. violated federal law by subjecting female IH Services employees to a hostile work environment based on sex and retaliating against them when they complained, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) charged in a lawsuit filed on May 1, 2023.

According to the EEOC's complaint, from at least May 2018 until late August 2020, IH Services, a staffing agency, assigned female employees to provide cleaning services at Mueller's Albertville, Alabama fire hydrant manufacturing plant where several of Mueller's male employees subjected at least three female IH Services employees to unwanted sexual touching and sexual comments about their bodies and sex lives. Mueller male employees also solicited the female cleaning crew for sex, asked to watch them have sex with their partners, exposed their genitals, and attempted to rape one of the female employees. At least three females complained to multiple IH

Services and Mueller managers, but both employers failed to take appropriate action to stop the harassment. Instead, IH Services retaliated against them by reducing their hours, transferring them to other undesirable shifts, and suspending or firing them.

This alleged conduct violates 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 unlawful sexual harassment. 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. The EEOC seeks monetary damages for the victims, including compensatory and punitive damages, and injunctive relief against the companies to prevent such unlawful conduct in the future.

“Title VII requires employers to provide a workplace free from severe or pervasive sexual harassment, even when the harassers are not its own employees,” said EEOC Birmingham District Director Bradley Anderson. “Likewise, Title VII requires employers to protect contract workers assigned to its workplace from harassment by its own employees.”

“The EEOC is committed to ensuring employers promptly investigate sexual harassment complaints and take appropriate remedial action regardless of whether the harassment occurs at its own worksite or another location where it assigns employees to work, said Marsha Rucker, regional attorney for the EEOC’s Birmingham District. “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.”

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

More information about sexual harassment is available at [\*\*https://www.eeoc.gov/sexual-harassment\*\*](https://www.eeoc.gov/sexual-harassment) ([\*\*https://www.eeoc.gov/sexual-harassment\*\*](https://www.eeoc.gov/sexual-harassment)). More information about retaliation is available at [\*\*https://www.eeoc.gov/retaliation\*\*](https://www.eeoc.gov/retaliation) ([\*\*https://www.eeoc.gov/retaliation\*\*](https://www.eeoc.gov/retaliation)).

The EEOC advances opportunity in the workplace by enforcing federal laws

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