



U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Press Release

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Shepherd Electric to Pay \$185,806 to Settle EEOC Race Discrimination and Retaliation Suit

Electrical Supply Company Fired Two Black Managers Because of Their Race and Complaints About Race Discrimination, Federal Agency Charged

BALTIMORE – Shepherd Electric Co., Inc., a wholesale electrical distributor that operates in the Baltimore/Washington area, will pay \$185,806 and furnish significant equitable relief to settle a race discrimination and retaliation lawsuit filed by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the federal agency announced today.

According to the EEOC's lawsuit, Shepherd Electric discriminated against two Black managers at the company's Laurel, Maryland warehouse. After one of the managers complained the company disciplined Black employees more harshly than white employees, he was fired, despite his many years of service with outstanding performance.

The EEOC further charged that the company discriminated against another manager when it unlawfully fired him one week after he complained the company paid a significantly higher salary to a newly hired white employee who performed

his same job duties.

Such alleged conduct violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits race discrimination and retaliating against employees for complaining about such behavior. The EEOC filed suit (EEOC v. Shepherd Electric Co., Inc., Civil Action No. 1:22-cv-02492) in U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Maryland after first attempting to reach a voluntary pre-litigation settlement through its conciliation process.

In addition to providing the former managers with monetary relief, the consent decree settling the suit prohibits Shepherd Electric from engaging in discrimination and retaliation. Shepherd Electric will provide training on federal anti-discrimination laws, with an emphasis on preventing race-based discrimination. It will report to the EEOC on how it handles any future internal complaints of race-based discrimination and will also post a notice regarding the settlement.

“Employees must be able to make good-faith complaints of race discrimination without fearing retribution, and the EEOC will go to court to protect victims of illegal workplace retaliation,” said Rosemarie Rhodes, Director of the EEOC’s Baltimore Field Office.

Philadelphia District Office Regional Attorney Debra Lawrence said, “Employers who make employment decisions based on race must be held accountable. The EEOC is committed to preventing and remedying race discrimination in the workplace.”

More information about race discrimination is available at <https://www.eeoc.gov/racecolor-discrimination> (<https://www.eeoc.gov/racecolor-discrimination>).

More information about retaliation is available at <https://www.eeoc.gov/retaliation> (<https://www.eeoc.gov/retaliation>).

The EEOC’s Philadelphia District Office investigates discrimination charges and prosecutes cases arising out of Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, West Virginia, parts of New Jersey, Ohio, and Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

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) (<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USEEOC/subscriber/new>).

