



U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Press Release

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EEOC Sues Sun Chemical Corporation for Race Discrimination and Retaliation

Federal Agency Charges Company Failed to Prevent or Correct a Racially Hostile Work Environment and Retaliated Against Employee Who Complained About It

ST. LOUIS – Sun Chemical Corporation violated federal law by failing to prevent or correct a racially hostile work environment at one of its facilities and then retaliating against an employee who complained about it, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) charged in a lawsuit yesterday.

According to the EEOC's suit, an employee at Sun Chemical's manufacturing facility in Kansas City, Missouri was subjected to a racially hostile work environment when a coworker verbally and physically harassed him with profanity in the lunchroom, followed him into the locker room, slammed his hand into the locker next to the employee, and called him the N-word. Supervisory employees at the facility were aware of that coworker using the N-word in the workplace on multiple prior occasions but failed to take prompt and appropriate corrective action. When the employee complained about being racially harassed by his coworker, Sun Chemical retaliated by issuing him a written warning for using profanity against the harasser.

Such alleged conduct violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits race discrimination in employment, including permitting a racially hostile work environment and retaliating against workers who oppose such discrimination. The EEOC filed suit (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission v. Sun Chemical Corp., Civil Action No. 4:23-cv-00694) in U.S. District Court for the Western District of Missouri after first attempting to reach a pre-litigation settlement via its conciliation process. The EEOC seeks monetary relief for the victim, as well as an order prohibiting future race discrimination, and other relief.

“Preventing workplace harassment requires actions, not just policies,” said Andrea G. Baran, regional attorney for the EEOC’s St. Louis District Office. “Employers must hold employees accountable for compliance with anti-harassment policies, and they cannot ignore it when workers use racial slurs or make physical threats.”

David Davis, director of the EEOC’s St. Louis District Office, said, “Workers should be able to report racial harassment to their employers without fear of retaliation. Unfortunately, some employers use discipline or other measures to try to dissuade employees from complaining about harassment. When this happens, the EEOC stands ready to step in to correct the situation.”

According to its website, “Sun Chemical is the World’s Leading Provider of Inks and Pressroom Products, Color Materials and Advanced Materials” and has manufacturing facilities across the United States and the world.

The EEOC’s St. Louis District Office is responsible for receiving and investigating charges of employment discrimination and conducting agency litigation in Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Nebraska, and a portion of southern Illinois, with area offices in Kansas City, Kansas, and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

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 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>).

